

• THE TUDOR SHAKESPEARE •



• CORIOLANUS •

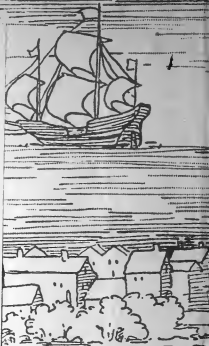


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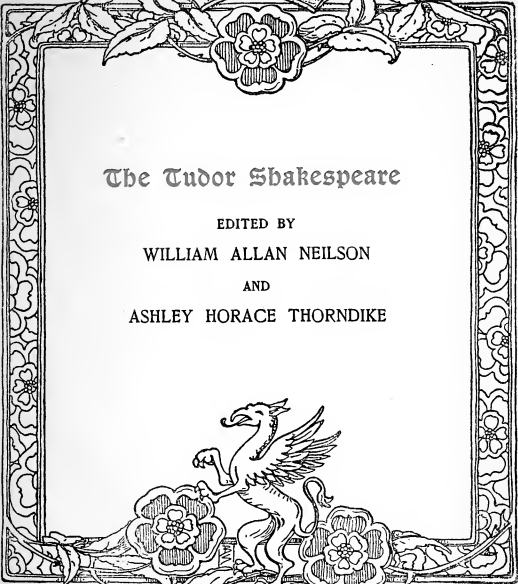
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The Tudor Shakespeare

EDITED BY  
WILLIAM ALLAN NEILSON  
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ASHLEY HORACE THORNDIKE





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*M. B. Quinn* 85

*in the Character of Coriolanus.*



THE TUDOR

SHAKESPEARE

The Tragedy of  
Coriolanus

Shakespeare, William

EDITED BY

STUART P. SHERMAN, PH.D.

PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH IN THE UNIVERSITY  
OF ILLINOIS



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## Introduction

*Text.* — Coriolanus was printed for the first time in the Folio of 1623. This edition, of which the readings are frequently difficult and corrupt, is the sole original authority, and constitutes accordingly the basis of the present text.

*Date of Composition.* — By the general consent of editors the date has been fixed between 1608 and 1610. The external evidence is of the flimsiest. For some points of Menenius's story of the belly and the members which are not found in Plutarch it has been conjectured that Shakespeare was indebted to a version of the tale which appears in Camden's *Remains*, published in 1605. Those who have supported a date prior to 1609 have relied mainly upon a supposed allusion to *Coriolanus*, II. ii. 105, in Jonson's *The Silent Woman*, acted in 1609: "Well, Dauphine, you have lurched your friends of the better half of the garland" (V. i — Truewit's last speech). The arguments based on the dearth of 1608-1609, the mulberry planting of 1609, and the change of a word in the Plutarch of 1612 are too slight independently to bear any weight. The internal evidence, however, — the closeness of structure, the occasional curtness and even crabbedness of style, the abundance of lines with weak and double endings — points unmistakably towards a date near the end of the period of the great tragedies.

*Source of the Plot.* — The ultimate source of the play lies in the uncertain twilight of legend behind the dawn of Roman history.<sup>1</sup> According to the accepted tradition, the life of Coriolanus falls in the period following the expulsion of the Tarquins; and his candidacy for the consulship in the year 491 B.C. The early accounts are extremely meager, and they differ widely in important points. Fabius, the oldest Roman annalist, writing in the time of Hannibal, reports that Coriolanus lived on in exile into old age. Cicero, though aware of a diverse story, has him commit suicide. Livy is uncertain as to the mode of his death. In his somewhat detailed narrative, Volturnia is the wife; Veturia is the mother; and Tullus Aufidius is represented by Attius Tullus. The account of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, the Greek historian on whom Plutarch seems chiefly to depend, tallies fairly well with that of Livy.

All the records of earlier writers, however, appear but as scant and shadowy outlines beside the mellow and imperishable masterpiece of Plutarch of Chæronea (born 50 A.D.). A biographer of Shakespearean insight, he grasped the central issues, breathed affluent humanity upon the scattered shreds of tradition, and created the towering Roman hero whom we know. By a double stroke of good fortune Plutarch's great collection of biographies became accessible to Shakespeare in a version which did honor to the original. The first praise for the modernization of this classic is due to Jaques Amyot, Grand Almoner of France and Bishop of Auxerre, who in 1559 published

<sup>1</sup> For an examination of the historical sources of Plutarch see Mommsen's *Römische Forschungen*, Bd. II, Berlin, 1879.

his French translation in a style to which Montaigne awarded the palm. In 1579 Thomas North, one of the noblest masters of Elizabethan prose, rendered Amyot's work into English.<sup>1</sup> Three other editions appeared in Shakespeare's lifetime — in 1595, 1603, and 1610-1612.

The relationship between the tragedy and *The Life of Caius Martius Coriolanus* in North's *Plutarch* is remarkably close. On a casual comparison one might be tempted to assert that Shakespeare merely translates his material from the biographical to the dramatic form. He adds scarcely a stroke to the richly detailed characterization of the hero, and he is anticipated in the names and at least a hint of the nature of virtually all the other actors. The main incidents — the struggle between the classes, the siege of Corioli and the disposition of the battle, the candidacy for the consulship, the banishment, the union with Tullus Aufidius, the siege of Rome, the embassy of friends and family, the compromise, the conspiracy of the Volscians — all these are to be found in the original. Furthermore, the essence of the tragedy for Plutarch no less than for Shakespeare is moral rather than political; the strife of patricians and populace is but as the sound of drums and cymbals accompanying the conflict in the spirit of the protagonist. Finally, Shakespeare takes over from North's translation many passages almost word for word, including parts of some of the finest speeches. It is not more than

<sup>1</sup> For a reprint of the complete work see George Wyndham's edition in six volumes in the Tudor Translations; see also *Shakespeare's Plutarch* by W. W. Skeat, and the useful edition of the *Life of Coriolanus* by R. H. Carr (Clarendon Press).

justice to say that he must share his triumph with two brilliant coadjutors, North and Plutarch.

Yet there is a great gulf between biographical narration and dramatic action. Examined more narrowly, *Coriolanus* reveals everywhere as compared with Plutarch — in suppression as well as in addition, in compression, emphasis, and intensification — a more exigent mind controlling a far more difficult art, a genius of higher pitch evoking a far more complex harmony.

Thus at the beginning of the play Shakespeare condenses the three popular uprisings recorded by Plutarch into one, because that suffices for his purpose. In Plutarch the banishment of Coriolanus follows some time after his failure to secure the consulship and in consequence of his opposition to a free distribution of corn. Shakespeare makes the banishment fall on his hero at the pinnacle of glory, hot on the heels of his candidacy. The omens and supernatural visions following the exile and made prominent by Plutarch, Shakespeare suppresses in the interest of the sternly realistic mood in which he has conceived the drama. He makes no use of "Martius Coriolanus' crafty accusation of the Volscians," perhaps thinking it inconsistent with the fiery frankness of his hero. He transfers the scene of the Volscian conspiracy from Antium to Corioli in the interest of tragic irony. His are the speeches of citizens and officers interpreting the mind of the people; the dialogue of servants in the house of Aufidius; the household scene between Volumnia, Virgilia, and Valeria; the effective scene in which Coriolanus reveals his poignant physical repugnance to exhibiting his scars to the

people; the scene in which Coriolanus's family and friends entreat him to temporize and assume humility; the scene in which Menenius is rebuffed. Most important of all is his development of the minor characters. Menenius, save for a hint two or three lines long, is his own creation. He replaces the vague "children" of Plutarch by the delightful sketch of the young Marcius. He subdues Valeria, who is the real heroine of the original, and brings Volumnia into the foreground, transforming her from a tearful suppliant into a matron of heroic mould and temper — such a woman as Cato would have a Roman mother. He disposes all the persons of the play in such a way that like so many mirrors they reflect the countenance of the hero and flash their light back upon his face.

The more closely these alterations are studied — the list is by no means exhaustive — the more indispensable they appear, and the more clearly it becomes evident that Shakespeare did not, as some of the elder commentators declared, take Plutarch over bodily and exactly, but, highly as he prized his material, transformed it to his own uses, dealt with it freely, imaginatively, creatively in his own imperial way.

That there was no saving grace in the subject is sufficiently illustrated by the fate of the several continental plays on the same theme. Among these may be mentioned Calderon's curiously anachronistic piece, *Las Armas de la Hermosura*; Alexandre Hardy's *Coriolan*, published in 1626; Urbain Chevreau's *Coriolan*, 1638; *Le véritable Coriolan* by Chapoton, 1638; Gaspard Abeille's *Coriolan* presented in 1676; Chaligny des Plaines' *Coriolan* presented in 1722; and the *Coriolan* of La Harpe, 1784.

*Relations to Contemporary Drama.* — The English stage had of course long been familiar with various periods of Roman history when *Coriolanus* appeared. A play now lost, *Julius Sesar*, performed at court two years before Shakespeare's birth, was herald to a series of attempts to present dramatically the life of the most popular hero of antiquity. In the neighborhood of 1588 Thomas Lodge drew upon North's *Plutarch* for *The Wounds of Civil War*, a play dealing in the loose style of the old chronicle history with the affairs of Marius and Sulla. An endeavor to treat classical subjects in classical form — in the fashion of Seneca — appears in the Countess of Pembroke's *Tragedy of Antonie*, printed in 1592, and in Daniel's companion piece, *Cleopatra*, printed in 1594. Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* is assigned to about the year 1600. In 1603, Heywood presented in a popular and typically Elizabethan vulgarization the ancient Roman story of the rape of Lucrece. In the same year was produced Marston's turgid tragedy of *Sophonisba*, printed in 1606 with some contemptuous allusions to the historical pedantry of honest Ben. Certain parallelisms might be shown between characters and situations in *Sophonisba* and *Coriolanus*. An important union of learned theory and professional stagecraft not found among aristocratic amateurs and university playwrights takes place in Jonson's *Sejanus*, also acted in 1603. About five years later Shakespeare was at work on *Antony and Cleopatra*.

Though *Coriolanus* is thus obviously the product of an extended dramatic evolution sustained by a popular demand for subjects drawn from ancient history, it would be



difficult to demonstrate in this case any specific indebtedness on Shakespeare's part to his predecessors in the Roman field. Having himself previously levied upon North's *Plutarch* for *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, he was his own greatest predecessor in the choice of a Roman theme. *Julius Caesar* stands at the beginning of his great tragic period, and is not fairly to be brought into comparison with the other two plays. The notable differences in handling as between the nearly contemporaneous *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus* are probably to be explained rather by Shakespeare's innate and profound sense of propriety and the exigencies of his material than by any alteration in his theory or external impulse. From his fellow dramatists of the romantic tradition certainly the author of *Othello* had at this time little to learn of technique. It is tempting to conjecture, though impossible to prove, that the classical precept and example of Jonson strengthened Shakespeare's movement in this period toward a somewhat austere realism, — helping to determine in *Coriolanus* the restriction of comic by-play, the severity of style, the close knitting of parts, the rigorous unity of action. His conception of tragic character, however, clearly owed nothing to the exasperated author of *Sejanus* and *Catiline*.

*Stage History.* — *Coriolanus* was resuscitated and remodeled after the Restoration by Nahum Tate, who saw "in some Passages, no small Resemblance with the busie Faction of our own time." Tate's attempt at timeliness is visible in his alteration of the title to *The Ingratitude of a Commonwealth, or the Fall of Caius Martius Coriolanus*

(1682). The most significant changes in the play itself are in the fifth act, where the dramatist strains for crude sensation by accumulating upon the original assassination of the hero the horrors of Virgilia's suicide, the murder of Menenius, the torture of young Martius, the killing of Aufidius, and the madness of Volumnia. In the isolated fall of the hero in Shakespeare's version there is something of sacrificial solemnity; Tate's conception of terror is well characterized by a line which he puts into the mouth of the improved *Coriolanus*:

“ Convulsions! Feavers! blewest Pestilence! ”

In November, 1719, the unsuccessful version of the poetaster and criticaster John Dennis, known as *The Invader of his Country or the Fatal Resentment*, was presented three times on the stage of Drury Lane, the leading part being taken by Booth. Dennis endeavored to bring the old and barbarous Elizabethan tragedy of Shakespeare into conformity with the dramatic ideals of his own very polite and learned age. He held, like many critics of his time, that Shakespeare was a great genius seriously handicapped by ignorance of the rules. He felt that *Coriolanus* was particularly faulty in failing to observe the principle of poetic justice: “ The Good must never fail to prosper, and the Bad must be always punish'd: Otherwise the Incidents, and particularly the Catastrophe which is the grand Incident, are liable to be imputed rather to chance, than to Almighty Conduct and to Sovereign Justice. The want of this impartial Distribution of Justice makes the *Coriolanus* of Shakespeare to be without Moral ” (*On the Genius and Writings of Shakespeare*, 1711). Besides kill-

ing Aufidius to equalize the punishment, Dennis mars the political scenes, adds some low comedy, and underscores the love interest.

Because of its influence upon the stage versions of Shakespeare it is necessary to mention here Thomson's posthumous tragedy of *Coriolanus*, brought out in 1749 at the Covent Garden Theater. This is a new play founded not on Plutarch, but on Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Attius Tullus replaces Aufidius; Veturia is the name given to Coriolanus's mother; and Volunnia is represented as his wife. Valeria does not appear. Another feature of interest is the introduction into the Volscian camp of the philosophical Galesus. Thomson's version is much more "regular" than that of Dennis. It retains no trace of the virtues of Shakespeare. All the rich variety of speech, the fulness of characterization, the vivid incidents, the shifting moods and humors are rejected in favor of a frigid decorum in style and persons, and an idle pomp of declamation. This singularly lifeless tragedy was presented ten times. The old print reproduced in the present volume<sup>1</sup> shows James Quin with flowing locks posing as Coriolanus in high-plumed bonnet and a curious close-bodied garment with a short, stiff, widely-flaring skirt; on her knees before him Peg Woffington as Veturia, voluminous in crinoline.

*Coriolanus or the Roman Matron*, an amalgamation of Thomson and Shakespeare attributed to Thomas Sheridan

<sup>1</sup> Through the courtesy of the Dramatic Museum of Columbia University.

and first brought out on the Dublin stage, was produced at the Theater Royal in Covent Garden in December, 1754. Galesus, Volusius, and Veturia, which part was played by Peg Woffington, are taken over from Thomson. An edition of the tragedy published in 1780 includes a portrait of Sheridan in the character of Coriolanus.

A second combination of Thomson and Shakespeare, arranged by John Kemble under the same title, was produced by him at Drury Lane in February, 1789. The first three acts deviated little, except by omission, from Shakespeare. Thomson supplied the opening of the fourth, and a considerable element of the fifth act. The part of Volunna, now restored to its original position, was assumed by Mrs. Siddons, and Coriolanus was taken by Kemble.

With these two great tragic actors in the leading rôles, Shakespeare may be said — according to the testimony of such critics as Lamb and Hazlitt — to have inherited his very wishes and the buildings of his fancy so far as stage representation is concerned. In them the grand classical style of acting culminated, and Coriolanus was probably Kemble's greatest, as it was certainly his most celebrated, impersonation. Under his management a considerable impulse was given toward propriety in costume and scenic effect. By their stateliness of bearing and sustained nobility of manner, both he and his illustrious sister reminded their audiences of antique statuary. Kemble played Coriolanus at intervals for nearly thirty years, and in that character made his reluctant and triumphant farewell to the stage at Covent Garden, June 23, 1817.

On January 24, 1820, Edmund Kean, whose flexible and fiery genius broke down the classical tradition of the Kembles, appeared at Drury Lane in the first modern production of *Coriolanus* with the text of Shakespeare restored; but his temper and stature were unequal to the part. The most plausible English successor of Kemble in this rôle was Macready, who made his appearance as *Coriolanus* in 1819, and kept the play on the stage during the next generation. In America Edwin Forrest impersonated the ardent yet statuesque Roman with great distinction and success. Edwin Booth, like Kean and Garrick, apparently felt himself by nature unqualified for the part. Sir Henry Irving studied the piece for many years, intending an elaborate production to be supervised by Alma Tadema; but his costly revival, finally brought out in 1901, was unsuccessful. Since about the middle of the last century *Coriolanus* seems to have wanted both an actor and an audience.

*Interpretation.* — Modern readers and critics often unconsciously view the drama through a kind of historical mist interposed by the rise of republican institutions. In the light of democratic hope, not unmingled with democratic cant, *Coriolanus* has frequently been regarded as essentially a one-sided presentation of the claims of aristocratic versus popular government. "This noble drama," Mrs. Inchbald remarks in the preface to the acting version included in the *British Theater* (1808), "has been withdrawn from the theater of late years, for some reasons of state. When the lower order of people are in good plight, they will bear contempt with cheerfulness, and

even with mirth; but poverty puts them out of humour at the slightest disrespect. Certain sentences in this play are, therefore, of dangerous tendency at certain times, though at other periods they are welcomed with loud applause." Charles Gildon, a stout Whig of Queen Anne's time who believes that "the People were never in the Wrong, but once," declares that "Our Poet seems fond to lay the Blame on the People, and everywhere is representing the Inconstance of the People, but this is contrary to Truth" (*Remarks on the Plays of Shakespear*, 1710). On the other hand Nahum Tate, a man of different kidney, revives *Coriolanus*, as we have seen, in the time of Charles II, "to Recommend Submission and Adherence to establish Lawful Power, which, in a word, is Loyalty."

In spite of the irresistible attraction of *Coriolanus* to political philosophers, it is extremely doubtful whether Shakespeare wrote the play with any political purpose whatsoever. It does not of course settle the question to point out that he presents the virtues and vices of Coriolanus, the demagoguery of the tribunes, and the mobility of the populace substantially as they appear in Plutarch. It is a material consideration, however, that he betrays, like Plutarch, by his emphasis upon a minute characterization of the hero an overwhelming interest in the specific moral and psychological problem before him. In other words, both Shakespeare and his original are profound and impartial students of human nature. In both the primary instinct is representative and artistic. The Greek biographer does not write to debate the issues between the classes; he writes to depict an individual, to expose his

virtues, defects, and idiosyncrasies, and to exhibit the relationship existing between the various qualities of his nature and the critical acts of his life. There, too, for Shakespeare lies the heart of the matter.

We can be certain that he felt the dramatic value of the strife between patricians and plebeians in the elucidation of his hero's personality, in the externalization of his character; but we cannot say with assurance that he felt it to be a question of great intrinsic interest. Coriolanus, to be sure, is vehemently interested in it, and gives his views of popular government in no mincing terms. But the other side of the argument is not really presented at all. It has been urged that this omission is due to Shakespeare's aristocratic prejudices, and this would be a fair charge if he had written the play with a political purpose. It is much more likely, however, that the omission is due to artistic economy. It is not necessary to debate the issues between patricians and plebeians, because the tragedy does not turn on them. It turns in Shakespeare, as in Plutarch, not upon political issues, but upon personal defects; it turns upon the intemperate pride, the fiery choler, the inflexibility of Coriolanus. He might have secured the consulship, if he could have asked for it ingratiatingly. He might have held his political opinions as long and as stoutly as he chose, provided only that on necessary occasions he could have held his tongue. He was not, strictly speaking, overthrown by populace, tribunes, or Volscians. The rocks on which he split were, as we say, the defects of his own qualities. He was ruined by his too steadfast valor, by his too sturdy

self-respect, by the too passionate unity and sincerity of his nature.

This point deserves emphasis, for it is of the essence of the tragedy. *Coriolanus* is not, as a recent writer of distinction declares, a tragedy of pride of birth, of a hero who never rises above the immediate emotion, "at heart the basest of human creatures." It is, on the contrary, the tragedy of the uncompromising idealist. The emotion which suffuses him is the foam and spray of the tide of opposition breaking in vain against his inviolable principles. The keynote of his character is struck in that splendid speech in which, under tremendous pressure from his friends, he has been rehearsing the never-acted scene of his submission to the people:

I will not do't,  
Lest I surcease to honour mine own truth  
And by my body's action teach my mind  
A most inherent baseness.

It is a serious mistake to consider birth the principal source of the pride of *Coriolanus*. Like Burke, he holds to the presumption that lofty bearing, political wisdom, and disinterested virtue are most likely to be found in a class elevated by fortune above the base compliances of necessity and long habituated to the exercise of power. So far his pride of birth extends. But like modern democrats — not demagogues — he believes that these qualities are the only qualifications for government; he does not for a moment rest his claim to esteem upon the accidents of rank and inheritance. His self-respect rests upon the fundamentally democratic basis of his actual achievements.



It is likewise a mistake to regard Coriolanus's war against his own country as proof of a nature essentially base. An ancient commentator might have referred this terrible crime to the saying that whom the gods would destroy they first make mad. The act clearly proceeds not from the man's essential nature, which was noble, but from a nature temporarily transformed by blinding passion kindled by insufferable outrage. Plutarch with penetrating subtlety describes the mood of Coriolanus in exile as one of profound sorrow in the disguise of a kind of ecstasy of wrath: "For when sorow (as you would saye) is set a fyre, then it is converted into spite and malice. . . . And this is the cause why the chollicke man is so altered, and mad in his actions, as a man set a fyre with a burning agewe." And Shakespeare follows Plutarch here: the sullen and silent Coriolanus sitting down before the gates of Rome is a man smoldering in rage and transformed beyond the recognition of his dearest friends. If this scene represented the essential nature of the hero, we should have no tragedy.

According to both Plutarch and Shakespeare, the tragedy of Coriolanus is the failure of a high, sincere, and splendid character who cannot discipline his virtues to live in tolerable relations with either the vices or the virtues of his fellows. His integrity is so complete, his convictions so inflexible, his sincerity so perfect as to be solitary and unsocial. His qualities, good in the abstract and in isolation, betray in society a cutting and evil edge, and clash with other and conflicting good qualities. Curiously enough Shakespeare seems to allow the unphilosophical

Aufidius to make the final scrupulously careful analysis of his hero's merits and defects, and to state the fundamental issues:

Whether 'twas pride,  
 Which out of daily fortune ever taints  
 The happy man; whether defect of judgement,  
 To fail in the disposing of those chances  
 Which he was lord of; or whether nature,  
 Not to be other than one thing, not moving  
 From the casque to the cushion, but commanding peace  
 Even with the same austerity and garb  
 As he controll'd the war; but one of these, —  
 As he hath spices of them all — not all, —  
 For I dare so far free him, — made him fear'd;  
 So, hated; and so, banish'd: but he has a merit  
 To choke it in the utterance. *So our virtues  
 Lie in the interpretation of the time;*  
 And power, unto itself most commendable,  
 Hath not a tomb so evident as a chair  
 To extol what it hath done.  
 One fire drives out one fire; one nail, one nail;  
*Rights by rights falter, strengths by strengths fail.*

**The Tragedy of Coriolanus**

## [DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

CAIUS MARCIUS, afterwards CAIUS MARCIUS CORIOLANUS.

TITUS LARTIUS, }  
COMINIUS, } generals against the Volscians.

MENENIUS AGRIPPA, friend to Coriolanus.

SICINIUS VELUTUS, }  
JUNIUS BRUTUS, } tribunes of the people.

Young MARCIUS, son to Coriolanus.

A Roman Herald.

TULLUS AUFIDIUS, general of the Volscians.

Lieutenant to Aufidius.

Conspirators with Aufidius.

A Citizen of Antium.

Two Volscian Guards.

VOLUMNIA, mother to Coriolanus.

VIRGILIA, wife to Coriolanus.

VALERIA, friend to Virgilia.

Gentlewoman, attending on Virgilia.

Roman and Volscian Senators, Patricians, Ædiles, Lictors, Soldiers,  
Citizens, Messengers, Servants to Aufidius, and other Attendants.

SCENE: *Rome and the neighbourhood; Corioli and the neighbourhood;  
Antium.*]

# The Tragedy of Coriolanus

## ACT FIRST

### SCENE I

[Rome. A street.]

*Enter a company of mutinous Citizens, with staves, clubs, and other weapons.*

1. *Cit.* Before we proceed any further, hear me speak.

*All.* Speak, speak.

1. *Cit.* You are all resolv'd rather to die than to famish?

5

*All.* Resolv'd, resolv'd.

1. *Cit.* First, you know Caius Marcius is chief enemy to the people.

*All.* We know 't, we know 't.

1. *Cit.* Let us kill him, and we'll have corn at our own price. Is't a verdict?

10

*All.* No more talking on't; let it be done. Away, away!

2. *Cit.* One word, good citizens.

1. *Cit.* We are accounted poor citizens, the patricians good. What authority surfeits on would relieve us; if they would yield us but the superfluity while it were wholesome, we might guess they relieved us humanely; but they think we are too dear. The leanness that afflicts us, the object of our misery, is as an inventory to particularize their abundance; our sufferance is a gain to them. Let us revenge this with our pikes, ere we become rakes; for the gods know I speak this in hunger for bread, not in thirst for revenge. 15
2. *Cit.* Would you proceed especially against Caius Marcius? 20
- All.* Against him first; he's a very dog to the commonalty.
2. *Cit.* Consider you what services he has done for his country? 30
1. *Cit.* Very well; and could be content to give him good report for't, but that he pays himself with being proud.
- [2. *Cit.*] Nay, but speak not maliciously. 35
1. *Cit.* I say unto you, what he hath done famously, he did it to that end. Though soft-conscienc'd men can be content to say it was for his country, he did it to please his mother, and to be partly proud; which he is, even to the altitude of his virtue. 40

2. *Cit.* What he cannot help in his nature, you account a vice in him. You must in no way say he is covetous.

1. *Cit.* If I must not, I need not be barren of accusations; he hath faults, with surplus, to tire in repetition. (*Shouts within.*) What shouts are these? The other side o' the city is risen; why stay we prating here? To the Capitol!

*All.* Come, come. 50

1. *Cit.* Soft! who comes here?

*Enter Menenius Agrippa.*

2. *Cit.* Worthy Menenius Agrippa, one that hath always lov'd the people.

1. *Cit.* He's one honest enough; would all the rest were so! 55

*Men.* What work's, my countrymen, in hand? Where go you

With bats and clubs? The matter? Speak, I pray you.

2. *Cit.* Our business is not unknown to the Senate. They have had inkling this fortnight what we intend to do, which now we'll show 'em in deeds. They say poor suitors have strong breaths; they shall know we have strong arms too. 60

*Men.* Why, masters, my good friends, mine honest neighbours,

Will you undo yourselves? 65

*2. Cit.* We cannot, sir, we are undone already.

*Men.* I tell you, friends, most charitable care  
Have the patricians of you. For your wants,  
Your suffering in this dearth, you may as well  
Strike at the heaven with your staves as lift  
them 70

Against the Roman state, whose course will on  
The way it takes, cracking ten thousand curbs  
Of more strong link asunder than can ever  
Appear in your impediment. For the dearth,  
The gods, not the patricians, make it, and 75  
Your knees to them, not arms, must help. Alack,  
You are transported by calamity  
Thither where more attends you, and you slander  
The helms o' the state, who care for you like fathers  
When you curse them as enemies. 80

*2. Cit.* Care for us! True, indeed! They ne'er  
car'd for us yet: suffer us to famish, and their  
store-houses cramm'd with grain; make edicts  
for usury, to support usurers; repeal daily  
any wholesome act established against the 85  
rich, and provide more piercing statutes  
daily, to chain up and restrain the poor. If  
the wars eat us not up, they will; and there's  
all the love they bear us.



*Men.* Either you must 90

Confess yourselves wondrous malicious,  
Or be accus'd of folly. I shall tell you  
A pretty tale. It may be you have heard it ;  
But, since it serves my purpose, I will venture  
To stale 't a little more. 95

*2. Cit.* Well, I'll hear it, sir ; yet you must not  
think to fob off our disgrace with a tale ; but,  
an't please you, deliver.

*Men.* There was a time when all the body's members  
Rebell'd against the belly, thus accus'd it : 100

That only like a gulf it did remain  
I' the midst o' the body, idle and unactive,  
Still cupboarding the viand, never bearing  
Like labour with the rest, where the other in-  
struments

Did see and hear, devise, instruct, walk, feel, 105  
And, mutually participate, did minister  
Unto the appetite and affection common  
Of the whole body. The belly answer'd —

*2. Cit.* Well, sir, what answer made the  
belly ? 110

*Men.* Sir, I shall tell you. With a kind of smile,  
Which ne'er came from the lungs, but even thus —  
For, look you, I may make the belly smile  
As well as speak — it tauntingly replied  
To the discontented members, the mutinous parts 115  
That envied his receipt ; even so most fitly

As you malign our senators for that  
They are not such as you.

2. *Cit.* Your belly's answer? What!  
The kingly-crowned head, the vigilant eye,  
The counsellor heart, the arm our soldier, 120  
Our steed the leg, the tongue our trumpeter,  
With other muniments and petty helps  
In this our fabric, if that they —

*Men.* What then?  
'Fore me, this fellow speaks! What then? what  
then?

2. *Cit.* Should by the cormorant belly be restrain'd, 125  
Who is the sink o' the body, —

*Men.* Well, what then?

2. *Cit.* The former agents, if they did complain,  
What could the belly answer?

*Men.* I will tell you.  
If you'll bestow a small — of what you have  
little — 129

Patience a while, you'st hear the belly's answer.

2. *Cit.* Ye're long about it.

*Men.* Note me this, good friend;  
Your most grave belly was deliberate,  
Not rash like his accusers, and thus answered:  
"True is it, my incorporate friends," quoth he,  
"That I receive the general food at first 135  
Which you do live upon; and fit it is,  
Because I am the store-house and the shop

Of the whole body. But, if you do remember,  
I send it through the rivers of your blood,  
Even to the court, the heart, to the seat o' the  
    brain ;                                      140

And, through the cranks and offices of man,  
The strongest nerves and small inferior veins  
From me receive that natural competency  
Whereby they live. And though that all at once,  
You, my good friends," — this says the belly,  
    mark me, —                                      145

*2. Cit.* Ay, sir ; well, well.

*Men.*                                      "Though all at once cannot  
See what I do deliver out to each,  
Yet I can make my audit up, that all  
From me do back receive the flour of all,  
And leave me but the bran." What say  
    you to 't?                                      150

*2. Cit.* It was an answer. How apply you this ?

*Men.* The senators of Rome are this good belly,  
And you the mutinous members ; for examine  
Their counsels and their cares, digest things  
    rightly  
Touching the weal o' the common, you shall  
    find    155

No public benefit which you receive  
But it proceeds or comes from them to you  
And no way from yourselves. What do you think,  
You, the great toe of this assembly ?

*2. Cit.* I the great toe! Why the great toe? 160

*Men.* For that, being one o' the lowest, basest, poorest,  
Of this most wise rebellion, thou goest foremost;  
Thou rascal, that art worst in blood to run,  
Lead'st first to win some vantage.  
But make you ready your stiff bats and clubs; 165  
Rome and her rats are at the point of battle,  
The one side must have bale.

*Enter Caius Marcius.*

Hail, noble Marcius!

*Mar.* Thanks. What's the matter, you dissentious  
rogues,

That, rubbing the poor itch of your opinion, 169  
Make yourselves scabs?

*2. Cit.* We have ever your good word.

*Mar.* He that will give good words to thee will flatter  
Beneath abhorring. What would you have, you  
curs,

That like nor peace nor war? The one affrights  
you,

The other makes you proud. He that trusts to  
you,

Where he should find you lions, finds you hares; 175  
Where foxes, geese. You are no surer, no,  
Than is the coal of fire upon the ice,  
Or hailstone in the sun. Your virtue is  
To make him worthy whose offence subdues him,

And curse that justice did it. Who deserves  
greatness 180

Deserves your hate ; and your affections are  
A sick man's appetite, who desires most that  
Which would increase his evil. He that depends  
Upon your favours swims with fins of lead  
And hews down oaks with rushes. Hang ye !  
Trust ye ? 185

With every minute you do change a mind,  
And call him noble that was now your hate,  
Him vile that was your garland. What's the  
matter,

That in these several places of the city  
You cry against the noble Senate, who, 190  
Under the gods, keep you in awe, which else  
Would feed on one another ? What's their seek-  
ing ?

*Men.* For corn at their own rates ; whereof, they say,  
The city is well stor'd.

*Mar.* Hang 'em ! They say !  
They'll sit by the fire, and presume to know 195  
What's done i' the Capitol ; who's like to rise,  
Who thrives, and who declines ; side factions,  
and give out  
Conjectural marriages ; making parties strong,  
And feebling such as stand not in their liking  
Below their cobbled shoes. They say there's  
grain enough ! 200

Would the nobility lay aside their ruth  
 And let me use my sword, I'd make a quarry  
 With thousands of these quarter'd slaves, as high  
 As I could pick my lance.

*Men.* Nay, these are almost thoroughly persuaded ; 205  
 For though abundantly they lack discretion,  
 Yet are they passing cowardly. But, I beseech you,  
 What says the other troop ?

*Mar.* They are dissolv'd, hang 'em !  
 They said they were an-hungry ; sigh'd forth  
 proverbs,

That hunger broke stone walls, that dogs must  
 eat, 210

That meat was made for mouths, that the gods  
 sent not

Corn for the rich men only. With these shreds  
 They vented their complainings ; which being  
 answer'd,

And a petition granted them, — a strange one  
 To break the heart of generosity, 215

And make bold power look pale, — they threw  
 their caps

As they would hang them on the horns o' the  
 moon,

Shouting their emulation.

*Men.* What is granted them ?

*Mar.* Five tribunes to defend their vulgar wisdoms,  
 Of their own choice. One's Junius Brutus, 220

Sicinius Velutus, and I know not — 'Sdeath !  
The rabble should have first unroof'd the city,  
Ere so prevail'd with me. It will in time  
Win upon power and throw forth greater themes  
For insurrection's arguing.

*Men.* This is strange.     225

*Mar.* Go, get you home, you fragments !

*Enter a Messenger, hastily.*

*Mess.* Where's Caius Marcius ?

*Mar.* Here. What's the matter ?

*Mess.* The news is, sir, the Volsces are in arms.

*Mar.* I am glad on't. Then we shall ha' means to  
vent

Our musty superfluity. See, our best elders.     230

*Enter Cominius, Titus Lartius, and other Senators ;  
Junius Brutus and Sicinius Velutus.*

*1. Sen.* Marcius, 'tis true that you have lately told  
us ;

The Volsces are in arms.

*Mar.* They have a leader,  
Tullus Aufidius, that will put you to 't.

I sin in envying his nobility,

And were I anything but what I am,     235

I would wish me only he.

*Com.* You have fought together ?

*Mar.* Were half to half the world by the ears and he  
Upon my party, I'd revolt, to make  
Only my wars with him. He is a lion  
That I am proud to hunt.

*1. Sen.* Then, worthy Marcius,  
Attend upon Cominius to these wars. 241

*Com.* It is your former promise.

*Mar.* Sir, it is ;  
And I am constant. Titus Lartius, thou  
Shalt see me once more strike at Tullus' face.  
What, art thou stiff ? Stand'st out ?

*Lart.* No, Caius Marcius ;  
I'll lean upon one crutch and fight with t'other, 246  
Ere stay behind this business.

*Men.* O, true-bred ! ,

[*1. Sen.* Your company to the Capitol ; where, I  
know,

Our greatest friends attend us.

*Lart.* [*To Com.*] Lead you on.

[*To Mar.*] Follow Cominius ; we must follow you ; 250  
Right worthy you priority.

*Com.* Noble Marcius !

[*1. Sen.* [*To the Citizens.*] Hence to your homes ;  
begone !

*Mar.* Nay, let them follow.

The Volsces have much corn ; take these rats  
thither





Opinion that so sticks on Marcius shall 275  
Of his demerits rob Cominius.

*Bru.* Come.

Half all Cominius' honours are to Marcius,  
Though Marcius earn'd them not, and all his faults  
To Marcius shall be honours, though indeed  
In aught he merit not.

*Sic.* Let's hence, and hear 280

How the dispatch is made, and in what fashion,  
More than his singularity, he goes  
Upon this present action.

*Bru.* Let's along. *Exeunt.*

## SCENE II

[*Corioli. The Senate-house.*]

*Enter Tullus Aufidius with Senators of Corioli.*

*1. Sen.* So, your opinion is, Aufidius,  
That they of Rome are ent'red in our counsels  
And know how we proceed.

*Auf.* Is it not yours?  
What ever have been thought on in this state,  
That could be brought to bodily act ere Rome 5  
Had circumvention? 'Tis not four days gone  
Since I heard thence; these are the words:— I  
think

I have the letter here; yes, here it is:—

[*Reads.*] "They have press'd a power, but it is not  
known

Whether for east or west. The dearth is great ;  
The people mutinous ; and it is rumour'd,      11  
Cominius, Marcius your old enemy,  
Who is of Rome worse hated than of you,  
And Titus Lartius, a most valiant Roman,  
These three lead on this preparation      15  
Whither 'tis bent. Most likely 'tis for you ;  
Consider of it."

1. *Sen.*                      Our army's in the field.  
We never yet made doubt but Rome was ready  
To answer us.

*Auf.*                      Nor did you think it folly  
To keep your great pretences veil'd till when      20  
They needs must show themselves ; which in the  
hatching,  
It seem'd, appear'd to Rome. By the discovery  
We shall be short'ned in our aim, which was  
To take in many towns ere almost Rome  
Should know we were afoot.

2. *Sen.*                      Noble Aufidius,      25  
Take your commission ; hie you to your bands ;  
Let us alone to guard Corioli.  
If they set down before 's, for the remove  
Bring up your army ; but, I think, you'll find  
They've not prepar'd for us.

*Auf.*                      O, doubt not that ;

I speak from certainties. Nay, more, 31  
 Some parcels of their power are forth already,  
 And only hitherward. I leave your honours.  
 If we and Caius Marcius chance to meet,  
 'Tis sworn between us we shall ever strike 35  
 Till one can do no more.

*All.* The gods assist you!

*Auf.* And keep your honours safe!

*1. Sen.* Farewell.

*2. Sen.* Farewell.

*All.* Farewell. *Exeunt.*

### SCENE III

[*Rome. A room in Marcius' house.*]

*Enter Volumnia and Virgilia: they set them down on two low stools, and sew.*

*Vol.* I pray you, daughter, sing; or express your-  
 self in a more comfortable sort. If my son  
 were my husband, I should freelier rejoice in  
 that absence wherein he won honour than in  
 the embracements of his bed where he would 5  
 show most love. When yet he was but ten-  
 der-bodied and the only son of my womb, when  
 youth with comeliness pluck'd all gaze his way,  
 when for a day of kings' entreaties a mother  
 should not sell him an hour from her behold- 10  
 ing, I, considering how honour would become  
 such a person, that it was no better than pic-

ture-like to hang by the wall, if renown made it not stir, was pleas'd to let him seek danger where he was like to find fame. To a cruel war I sent him ; from whence he return'd, his brows bound with oak. I tell thee, daughter, I sprang not more in joy at first hearing he was a man-child than now in first seeing he had proved himself a man. 15

*Vir.* But had he died in the business, madam ; how then ? 20

*Vol.* Then his good report should have been my son ; I therein would have found issue. Hear me profess sincerely : had I a dozen sons, each in my love alike and none less dear than thine and my good Marcius, I had rather had eleven die nobly for their country than one voluptuously surfeit out of action. 25

*Enter a Gentlewoman.*

*Gent.* Madam, the Lady Valeria is come to visit you.

*Vir.* Beseech you, give me leave to retire myself. 30

*Vol.* Indeed, you shall not.

Methinks I hear hither your husband's drum,  
See him pluck Aufidius down by the hair,  
As children from a bear, the Volsces shunning him.  
Methinks I see him stamp thus, and call thus : 35  
"Come on, you cowards ! you were got in fear,

Though you were born in Rome." His bloody  
brow

With his mail'd hand then wiping, forth he goes,  
Like to a harvest-man that's task'd to mow  
Or all or lose his hire. 40

*Vir.* His bloody brow! O Jupiter, no blood!

*Vol.* Away, you fool! it more becomes a man  
Than gilt his trophy. The breasts of Hecuba,  
When she did suckle Hector, look'd not lovelier  
Than Hector's forehead when it spit forth blood 45  
At Grecian sword, contemning. Tell Valeria,  
We are fit to bid her welcome. *Exit Gent.*

*Vir.* Heavens bless my lord from fell Aufidius!

*Vol.* He'll beat Aufidius' head below his knee  
And tread upon his neck. 50

*Enter Valeria, with an Usher and Gentlewoman.*

*Val.* My ladies both, good day to you.

*Vol.* Sweet madam.

*Vir.* I am glad to see your ladyship.

*Val.* How do you both? You are manifest house-  
keepers. What are you sewing here? A fine 55  
spot, in good faith. How does your little  
son?

*Vir.* I thank your ladyship; well, good ma-  
dam.

*Vol.* He had rather see the swords and hear a drum 60  
than look upon his schoolmaster.

*Val.* O' my word, the father's son. I'll swear, 'tis a very pretty boy. O' my troth, I look'd upon him o' Wednesday half an hour together; has such a confirm'd countenance. I saw him run after a gilded butterfly; and when he caught it, he let it go again; and after it again; and over and over he comes, and up again; catch'd it again; or whether his fall enrag'd him, or how 'twas, he did so set his teeth and tear it. O, I warrant, how he mammock'd it!

*Vol.* One on 's father's moods.

*Val.* Indeed, la, 'tis a noble child.

*Vir.* A crack, madam.

*Val.* Come, lay aside your stitchery; I must have you play the idle housewife with me this afternoon.

*Vir.* No, good madam; I will not out of doors.

*Val.* Not out of doors!

*Vol.* She shall, she shall.

*Vir.* Indeed, no, by your patience; I'll not over the threshold till my lord return from the wars.

*Val.* Fie, you confine yourself most unreasonably. Come, you must go visit the good lady that lies in.

*Vir.* I will wish her speedy strength, and visit her with my prayers; but I cannot go thither.

*Vol.* Why, I pray you?

*Vir.* 'Tis not to save labour, nor that I want 90  
love.

*Val.* You would be another Penelope : yet, they  
say, all the yarn she spun in Ulysses' absence  
did but fill Ithaca full of moths. Come ; I  
would your cambric were sensible as your 95  
finger, that you might leave pricking it for  
pity. Come, you shall go with us.

*Vir.* No, good madam, pardon me ; indeed, I will  
not forth.

*Val.* In truth, la, go with me ; and I'll tell you 100  
excellent news of your husband.

*Vir.* O, good madam, there can be none yet.

*Val.* Verily, I do not jest with you ; there came  
news from him last night.

*Vir.* Indeed, madam ? 105

*Val.* In earnest, it's true ; I heard a senator speak  
it. Thus it is : the Volsces have an army  
forth ; against whom Cominius the general is  
gone, with one part of our Roman power.  
Your lord and Titus Lartius are set down be- 110  
fore their city Corioli ; they nothing doubt pre-  
vailing and to make it brief wars. This is true,  
on mine honour ; and so, I pray, go with us.

*Vir.* Give me excuse, good madam ; I will obey  
you in everything hereafter. 115

*Vol.* Let her alone, lady. As she is now, she will  
but disease our better mirth.



*Val.* In troth, I think she would. Fare you well, then. Come, good sweet lady. Prithee, Virgilia, turn thy solemnness out o' door, and go 120 along with us.

*Vir.* No, at a word, madam; indeed, I must not. I wish you much mirth.

*Val.* Well, then, farewell. *Exeunt.*

## SCENE IV

*Before Corioli.*

*Enter, with drum and colours, Marcius, Titus Lartius, Captains and Soldiers. To them a Messenger.*

*Mar.* Yonder comes news. A wager they have met.

*Lart.* My horse to yours, no.

*Mar.* 'Tis done.

*Lart.* Agreed.

*Mar.* Say, has our general met the enemy?

*Mess.* They lie in view; but have not spoke as yet.

*Lart.* So, the good horse is mine.

*Mar.* I'll buy him of you.

*Lart.* No, I'll nor sell nor give him; lend you him  
I will 6

For half a hundred years. Summon the town.

*Mar.* How far off lie these armies?

*Mess.* Within this mile and half.

*Mar.* Then shall we hear their 'larum, and they ours.

Now, Mars, I prithee, make us quick in work, 10

That we with smoking swords may march from  
hence

To help our fielded friends! Come, blow thy  
blast.

*They sound a parley. Enter two Senators with others on  
the walls.*

Tullus Aufidius, is he within your walls?

1. *Sen.* No, nor a man that fears you less than he,  
That's lesser than a little. [*Drum afar off.*]

Hark! our drums 15

Are bringing forth our youth. We'll break our  
walls,

Rather than they shall pound us up. Our gates,  
Which yet seem shut, we have but pinn'd with  
rushes;

They'll open of themselves. [*Alarum afar off.*]

Hark you, far off!

There is Aufidius; list, what work he makes 20

Amongst your cloven army.

*Mar.* O, they are at it!

*Lart.* Their noise be our instruction. Ladders, ho!

*Enter the army of the Volsces.*

*Mar.* They fear us not, but issue forth their city.

Now put your shields before your hearts, and fight

With hearts more proof than shields. Advance,

brave Titus! 25

They do disdain us much beyond our thoughts,  
Which makes me sweat with wrath. Come on, my  
fellows!

He that retires, I'll take him for a Volscie,  
And he shall feel mine edge. [Exit.]

*Alarum. The Romans are beat back to their trenches.  
Re-enter Marcius, cursing.*

*Mar.* All the contagion of the south light on you, 30  
You shames of Rome! you herd of — Boils and  
plagues

Plaster you o'er, that you may be abhorr'd  
Further than seen, and one infect another  
Against the wind a mile! You souls of geese,  
That bear the shapes of men, how have you run 35  
From slaves that apes would beat! Pluto and  
hell!

All hurt behind! Backs red, and faces pale  
With flight and agued fear! Mend and charge  
home,

Or, by the fires of heaven, I'll leave the foe  
And make my wars on you. Look to't; come  
on! 40

If you'll stand fast, we'll beat them to their wives,  
As they us to our trenches followed.

*Another alarum. [The Volscies fly,] and  
Marcius follows them to the gates.*

So, now the gates are ope; now prove good seconds.

'Tis for the followers fortune widens them,  
Not for the fliers. Mark me, and do the like. 45

*Enters the gates.*

1. *Sol.* Fool-hardiness; not I.

2. *Sol.*

Nor I.

*Marcus is shut in.*

1. *Sol.* See, they have shut him in.

*Alarum continues.*

*All.*

To the pot, I warrant him.

*Re-enter Titus Lartius.*

*Lart.* What is become of Marcus?

*All.*

Slain, sir, doubtless.

1. *Sol.* Following the fliers at the very heels,

With them he enters; who, upon the sudden, 50  
Clapp'd to their gates. He is himself alone,  
To answer all the city.

*Lart.*

O noble fellow!

Who sensibly outdares his senseless sword,  
And, when it bows, stands up. Thou art left,  
Marcus;

A carbuncle entire, as big as thou art, 55  
Were not so rich a jewel. Thou wast a soldier  
Even to Cato's wish, not fierce and terrible  
Only in strokes; but, with thy grim looks and



And hark, what noise the general makes! To  
him! 10

There is the man of my soul's hate, Aufidius,  
Piercing our Romans; then, valiant Titus, take  
Convenient numbers to make good the city;  
Whilst I, with those that have the spirit, will  
haste

To help Cominius.

*Lart.* Worthy sir, thou bleed'st. 15  
Thy exercise hath been too violent for  
A second course of fight.

*Mar.* Sir, praise me not,  
My work hath yet not warm'd me; fare you well.  
The blood I drop is rather physical  
Than dangerous to me. To Aufidius thus 20  
I will appear, and fight.

*Lart.* Now the fair goddess, Fortune,  
Fall deep in love with thee; and her great charms  
Misguide thy opposers' swords! Bold gentle-  
man,  
Prosperity be thy page!

*Mar.* Thy friend no less  
Than those she placeth highest! So, farewell. 25

*Lart.* Thou worthiest Marcius! [*Exit Marcius.*]  
Go, sound thy trumpet in the market-place;  
Call thither all the officers o' the town,  
Where they shall know our mind. Away!

*Exeunt.*

## SCENE VI

[Near the camp of Cominius.]

*Enter Cominius, as it were in retire, with soldiers.*

*Com.* Breathe you, my friends; well fought. We  
are come off

Like Romans, neither foolish in our stands,  
Nor cowardly in retire. Believe me, sirs,  
We shall be charg'd again. Whiles we have  
struck,

By interims and conveying gusts we have heard  
The charges of our friends. Ye Roman gods! 6  
Lead their successes as we wish our own,  
That both our powers, with smiling fronts en-  
count'ring,

May give you thankful sacrifice.

*Enter a Messenger.*

Thy news?

*Mess.* The citizens of Corioli have issued 10  
And given to Lartius and to Marcius battle.  
I saw our party to their trenches driven,  
And then I came away.

*Com.* Though thou speak'st truth,  
Methinks thou speak'st not well. How long is't  
since?

*Mess.* Above an hour, my lord. 15

*Com.* 'Tis not a mile ; ' briefly we heard their drums.  
 How couldst thou in a mile confound an hour,  
 And bring thy news so late ?

*Mess.* Spies of the Volsces  
 Held me in chase, that I was forc'd to wheel  
 Three or four miles about, else had I, sir, 20  
 Half an hour since brought my report.

*Enter Marcius.*

*Com.* Who's yonder,  
 That does appear as he were flay'd ? O gods !  
 He has the stamp of Marcius ; and I have  
 Before-time seen him thus.

*Mar.* Come I too late ?

*Com.* The shepherd knows not thunder from a tabor 25  
 More than I know the sound of Marcius' tongue  
 From every meaner man.

*Mar.* Come I too late ?

*Com.* Ay, if you come not in the blood of others,  
 But mantled in your own.

*Mar.* O, let me clip ye  
 In arms as sound as when I woo'd, in heart 30  
 As merry as when our nuptial day was done,  
 And tapers burn'd to bedward !

*Com.* Flower of warriors,  
 How is't with Titus Lartius ?

*Mar.* As with a man busied about decrees :  
 Condemning some to death, and some to exile ; 35



Ransoming him, or pitying, threat'ning the  
other ;

Holding Corioli in the name of Rome,  
Even like a fawning greyhound in the leash,  
To let him slip at will.

*Com.* Where is that slave  
Which told me they had beat you to your  
trenches ? 40  
Where is he ? Call him hither.

*Mar.* Let him alone ;  
He did inform the truth. But for our gentle-  
men, —  
The common file — a plague ! tribunes for  
them ! —  
The mouse ne'er shunn'd the cat as they did  
budge  
From rascals worse than they.

*Com.* But how prevail'd you ?

*Mar.* Will the time serve to tell ? I do not think. 46  
Where is the enemy ? Are you lords o' th' field ?  
If not, why cease you till you are so ?

*Com.* Marcius,  
We have at disadvantage fought, and did  
Retire to win our purpose. 50

*Mar.* How lies their battle ? Know you on which  
side

They have plac'd their men of trust ?

*Com.* As I guess, Marcius,

Their bands i' the vaward are the Antiates,  
Of their best trust ; o'er them Aufidius,  
Their very heart of hope.

*Mar.* I do beseech you, 55  
By all the battles wherein we have fought,  
By the blood we have shed together, by the vows  
We have made to endure friends, that you directly  
Set me against Aufidius and his Antiates ;  
And that you not delay the present, but, 60  
Filling the air with swords advanc'd and darts,  
We prove this very hour.

*Com.* Though I could wish  
You were conducted to a gentle bath  
And balms applied to you, yet dare I never  
Deny your asking. Take your choice of those 65  
That best can aid your action.

*Mar.* Those are they  
That most are willing. If any such be here —  
As it were sin to doubt — that love this painting  
Wherein you see me smear'd ; if any fear  
Lesser his person than an ill report ; 70  
If any think brave death outweighs bad life,  
And that his country's dearer than himself ;  
Let him alone, or so many so minded,  
Wave thus, to express his disposition,  
And follow Marcius. 75

*They all shout and wave their swords, take him  
up in their arms, and cast up their caps.*

O, me alone, make you a sword of me?  
 If these shows be not outward, which of you  
 But is four Volsces? None of you but is  
 Able to bear against the great Aufidius  
 A shield as hard as his. A certain number, 80  
 Though thanks to all, must I select from all; the  
     rest  
 Shall bear the business in some other fight,  
 As cause will be obey'd. Please you to march;  
 And four shall quickly draw out my command,  
 Which men are best inclin'd.

*Com.* March on, my fellows!  
 Make good this ostentation, and you shall 86  
 Divide in all with us. *Exeunt.*

## SCENE VII

[*The gates of Corioli.*]

*Titius Lartius, having set a guard upon Corioli, going with drum and trumpet toward Cominius and Caius Marcius, enters with a Lieutenant, other Soldiers, and a Scout.*

*Lart.* So, let the ports be guarded; keep your duties,  
 As I have set them down. If I do send, dispatch  
 Those centuries to our aid; the rest will serve  
 For a short holding. If we lose the field,  
 We cannot keep the town.

*Lieu.* Fear not our care, sir.  
*Lart.* Hence, and shut your gates upon 's. 6  
 Our guider, come; to the Roman camp conduct  
 us. *Exeunt.*

## SCENE VIII

[*A field of battle.*]

*Alarum as in battle. Enter Marcius and Aufidius at several doors.*

*Mar.* I'll fight with none but thee, for I do hate thee  
 Worse than a promise-breaker.

*Auf.* We hate alike.

Not Afric owns a serpent I abhor  
 More than thy fame and envy. Fix thy foot.

*Mar.* Let the first budger die the other's slave, 5  
 And the gods doom him after!

*Auf.* If I fly, Marcius,  
 Holloa me like a hare.

*Mar.* Within these three hours, Tullus,  
 Alone I fought in your Corioli walls,  
 And made what work I pleas'd. 'Tis not my  
 blood

Wherein thou seest me mask'd; for thy revenge 10  
 Wrench up thy power to the highest.

*Auf.* Wert thou the Hector  
 That was the whip of your bragg'd progeny,

Thou shouldst not scape me here.

*Here they fight, and certain Volsces come in the aid of Aufidius. Marcius fights till they be driven in breathless.*

Officious, and not valiant, you have sham'd me  
In your condemned seconds. [Exeunt.] 15

### SCENE IX

[The Roman camp.]

*Flourish. Alarum. A retreat is sounded. Enter, at one door, Cominius with the Romans; at another door, Marcius, with his arm in a scarf.*

*Com.* If I should tell thee o'er this thy day's work,  
Thou'lt not believe thy deeds; but I'll report  
it

Where senators shall mingle tears with smiles,  
Where great patricians shall attend and shrug,  
I' the end admire, where ladies shall be frighted, 5  
And, gladly quak'd, hear more; where the dull  
tribunes,

That with the fusty plebeians hate thine honours,  
Shall say against their hearts, "We thank the  
gods

Our Rome hath such a soldier."

Yet cam'st thou to a morsel of this feast, 10  
Having fully din'd before.

*Enter Titus Lartius, with his power, from the pursuit.*

*Lart.* O general,  
Here is the steed, we the caparison.  
Hadst thou beheld —

*Mar.* Pray now, no more. My mother,  
Who has a charter to extol her blood,  
When she does praise me grieves me. I have  
done 15  
As you have done, that's what I can; induc'd  
As you have been, that's for my country.  
He that has but effected his good will  
Hath overta'en mine act.

*Com.* You shall not be  
The grave of your deserving; Rome must know 20  
The value of her own. 'Twere a concealment  
Worse than a theft, no less than a traducement,  
To hide your doings, and to silence that  
Which, to the spire and top of praises vouch'd,  
Would seem but modest; therefore, I beseech  
you — 25  
In sign of what you are, not to reward  
What you have done — before our army hear me.

*Mar.* I have some wounds upon me, and they smart  
To hear themselves rememb' red.

*Com.* Should they not,  
Well might they fester 'gainst ingratitude, 30  
And tent themselves with death. Of all the horses,

Whereof we have ta'en good and good store, of all  
The treasure in this field achiev'd and city,  
We render you the tenth, to be ta'en forth,  
Before the common distribution, at 35  
Your only choice.

*Mar.* I thank you, general;  
But cannot make my heart consent to take  
A bribe to pay my sword. I do refuse it,  
And stand upon my common part with those  
That have beheld the doing. 40

*A long flourish. They all cry, "Marcius!  
Marcius!" cast up their caps and  
lances. Cominius and Lartius stand  
bare.*

May these same instruments, which you profane,  
Never sound more! When drums and trumpets  
shall

I' the field prove flatterers, let courts and cities be  
Made all of false-fac'd soothing!

When steel grows soft as the parasite's silk, 45  
Let him be made a coverture for the wars!

No more, I say! For that I have not wash'd  
My nose that bled, or foil'd some debile wretch, —  
Which, without note, here's many else have done, —  
You shout me forth 50

In acclamations hyperbolical,  
As if I lov'd my little should be dieted  
In praises sauc'd with lies.

*Com.* Too modest are you ;  
 More cruel to your good report than grateful  
 To us that give you truly. By your patience, 55  
 If 'gainst yourself you be incens'd, we'll put  
 you,  
 Like one that means his proper harm, in man-  
 acles,  
 Then reason safely with you. Therefore be it  
 known,  
 As to us, to all the world, that Caius Marcius  
 Wears this war's garland ; in token of the which, 60  
 My noble steed, known to the camp, I give  
 him,  
 With all his trim belonging ; and from this  
 time,  
 For what he did before Corioli, call him,  
 With all the applause and clamour of the host,  
 CAIUS MARCIUS CORIOLANUS ! Bear 65  
 The addition nobly ever !

*Flourish. Trumpets sound, and drums.*

*All.* Caius Marcius Coriolanus !

*Cor.* I will go wash ;  
 And when my face is fair, you shall perceive  
 Whether I blush or no ; howbeit, I thank you. 70  
 I mean to stride your steed, and at all times  
 To undercrest your good addition  
 To the fairness of my power.

*Com.* So, to our tent ;



Where, ere we do repose us, we will write  
To Rome of our success. You, Titus Lartius, 75  
Must to Corioli back, send us to Rome  
The best, with whom we may articulate  
For their own good and ours.

*Lart.* I shall, my lord.

*Cor.* The gods begin to mock me. I, that now  
Refus'd most princely gifts, am bound to beg 80  
Of my lord general.

*Com.* Take't; 'tis yours. What is't?

*Cor.* I sometime lay here in Corioli  
At a poor man's house; he us'd me kindly.  
He cried to me, — I saw him prisoner, —  
But then Aufidius was within my view, 85  
And wrath o'erwhelmed my pity. I request you  
To give my poor host freedom.

*Com.* O, well begg'd!

Were he the butcher of my son, he should  
Be free as is the wind. Deliver him, Titus.

*Lart.* Marcius, his name?

*Cor.* By Jupiter! forgot. 90

I am weary; yea, my memory is tir'd.  
Have we no wine here?

*Com.* Go we to our tent.

The blood upon your visage dries; 'tis time  
It should be look'd to. Come. *Exeunt.*

## SCENE X

[The camp of the Volsces.]

*A flourish. Cornets. Enter Tullus Aufidius, bloody, with two or three Soldiers.*

*Auf.* The town is ta'en !

[1.] *Sol.* 'Twill be deliver'd back on good condition.

*Auf.* Condition !

I would I were a Roman ; for I cannot,  
Being a Volscce, be that I am. Condition ! 5

What good condition can a treaty find  
I' the part that is at mercy ? Five times, Marcius,  
I have fought with thee ; so often hast thou beat  
me,

And wouldst do so, I think, should we encounter  
As often as we eat. By the elements, 10

If e'er again I meet him beard to beard,  
He's mine, or I am his. Mine emulation  
Hath not that honour in't it had ; for where  
I thought to crush him in an equal force,  
True sword to sword, I'll potch at him some  
way ; 15

Or wrath or craft may get him.

[1.] *Sol.* He's the devil.

*Auf.* Bolder, though not so subtle. My valour's  
poison'd

With only suff'ring stain by him ; for him

Shall fly out of itself. Nor sleep nor sanctuary,  
 Being naked, sick, nor fane nor Capitol, 20  
 The prayers of priests nor times of sacrifice,  
 Embargements all of fury, shall lift up  
 Their rotten privilege and custom 'gainst  
 My hate to Marcius. Where I find him, were it  
 At home, upon my brother's guard, even there,  
 Against the hospitable canon, would I 26  
 Wash my fierce hand in 's heart. Go you to the  
 city ;  
 Learn how 'tis held, and what they are that must  
 Be hostages for Rome.

[1.] *Sol.* Will not you go ?

*Auf.* I am attended at the cypress grove. I pray  
 you — 30

'Tis south the city mills — bring me word thither  
 How the world goes, that to the pace of it  
 I may spur on my journey.

[1.] *Sol.* I shall, sir.

[*Exeunt.*]



## ACT TWO

### SCENE I

[*Rome. A public place.*]

*Enter Menenius, with the two Tribunes of the people, Sicinius and Brutus.*

*Men.* The augurer tells me we shall have news to-night.

*Bru.* Good or bad?

*Men.* Not according to the prayer of the people, for they love not Marcius. 5

*Sic.* Nature teaches beasts to know their friends.

*Men.* Pray you, who does the wolf love?

*Sic.* The lamb.

*Men.* Ay, to devour him; as the hungry plebeians would the noble Marcius. 10

*Bru.* He's a lamb indeed, that baes like a bear.

*Men.* He's a bear indeed, that lives like a lamb. You two are old men: tell me one thing that I shall ask you. 15

*Both.* Well, sir.

*Men.* In what enormity is Marcius poor in, that you two have not in abundance?

*Bru.* He's poor in no one fault, but stor'd with all. 20

*Sic.* Especially in pride.

*Bru.* And topping all others in boasting.

*Men.* This is strange now. Do you two know how  
you are censured here in the city, I mean of      25  
us o' the right-hand file? Do you?

*Both.* Why, how are we censur'd?

*Men.* Because you talk of pride now, — will you  
not be angry?

*Both.* Well, well, sir, well.      30

*Men.* Why, 'tis no great matter; for a very little  
thief of occasion will rob you of a great deal of  
patience. Give your dispositions the reins,  
and be angry at your pleasures; at the least,  
if you take it as a pleasure to you in being so.      35  
You blame Marcius for being proud?

*Bru.* We do it not alone, sir.

*Men.* I know you can do very little alone, for your  
helps are many, or else your actions would      40  
grow wondrous single; your abilities are too  
infant-like for doing much alone. You talk of  
pride: O that you could turn your eyes toward  
the napes of your necks, and make but an in-  
terior survey of your good selves! O that you  
could!

*Both.* What then, sir?      45

*Men.* Why, then you should discover a brace of  
unmeriting, proud, violent, testy magistrates,  
alias fools, as any in Rome.

*Sic.* Menenius, you are known well enough  
too. 50

*Men.* I am known to be a humorous patrician,  
and one that loves a cup of hot wine with not  
a drop of allaying Tiber in't; said to be some-  
thing imperfect in favouring the first complaint;  
hasty and tinder-like upon too trivial motion; 55  
one that converses more with the buttock of  
the night than with the forehead of the morn-  
ing. What I think, I utter, and spend my  
malice in my breath. Meeting two such  
wealsmen as you are — I cannot call you Ly- 60  
curguses — if the drink you give me touch my  
palate adversely, I make a crooked face at it.  
I can't say your worships have deliver'd the  
matter well, when I find the ass in compound  
with the major part of your syllables; and 65  
though I must be content to bear with those  
that say you are reverend grave men, yet  
they lie deadly that tell you have good faces.  
If you see this in the map of my microcosm,  
follows it that I am known well enough too?  
What harm can your bisson conspectuities 70  
glean out of this character, if I be known well  
enough too?

*Bru.* Come, sir, come, we know you well enough.

*Men.* You know neither me, yourselves, nor any-  
thing. You are ambitious for poor knaves' 75  
caps and legs. You wear out a good whole-

some forenoon in hearing a cause between an orange-wife and a faucet-seller; and then re-journ the controversy of three pence to a second day of audience. When you are hearing a matter between party and party, if you chance to be pinch'd with the colic, you make faces like mummers; set up the bloody flag against all patience; and, in roaring for a chamber-pot, dismiss the controversy bleeding, the more entangled by your hearing. All the peace you make in their cause is calling both the parties knaves. You are a pair of strange ones. 80 85

*Bru.* Come, come, you are well understood to be a perfecter giber for the table than a necessary bencher in the Capitol. 90

*Men.* Our very priests must become mockers, if they shall encounter such ridiculous subjects as you are. When you speak best unto the purpose, it is not worth the wagging of your beards; and your beards deserve not so honourable a grave as to stuff a botcher's cushion, or to be entomb'd in an ass's pack-saddle. Yet you must be saying Marcius is proud; who, in a cheap estimation, is worth all your predecessors since Deucalion, though peradventure some of the best of 'em were hereditary hangmen. God-den to your worships. More 95 100

of your conversation would infect my brain,  
being the herdsmen of the beastly plebeians. 105  
I will be bold to take my leave of you.

*Brutus and Sicinius go aside.*

*Enter Volumnia, Virgilia, and Valeria.*

How now, my as fair as noble ladies, — and  
the moon, were she earthly, no nobler, —  
whither do you follow your eyes so fast?

*Vol.* Honourable Menenius, my boy Marcius ap- 110  
proaches. For the love of Juno, let's go.

*Men.* Ha! Marcius coming home?

*Vol.* Ay, worthy Menenius; and with most prosper-  
ous approbation.

*Men.* Take my cap, Jupiter, [*tosses it up*] and I 115  
thank thee. Hoo! Marcius coming home!

*2 Ladies.* Nay, 'tis true.

*Vol.* Look, here's a letter from him; the state hath  
another, his wife another, and, I think, there's  
one at home for you. 120

*Men.* I will make my very house reel to-night. A  
letter for me!

*Vir.* Yes, certain, there's a letter for you; I  
saw't.

*Men.* A letter for me! it gives me an estate of 125  
seven years' health, in which time I will make  
a lip at the physician. The most sovereign  
prescription in Galen is but empiricitic, and,



to this preservative, of no better report than a horse-drench. Is he not wounded? He was 130  
wont to come home wounded.

*Vir.* O, no, no, no.

*Vol.* O, he is wounded; I thank the gods for't.

*Men.* So do I too, if it be not too much. Brings  
'a victory in his pocket? The wounds be- 135  
come him.

*Vol.* On 's brows. Menenius, he comes the third  
time home with the oaken garland.

*Men.* Has he disciplin'd Aufidius soundly?

*Vol.* Titus Lartius writes, they fought together, 140  
but Aufidius got off.

*Men.* And 'twas time for him too, I'll warrant  
him that. An he had stay'd by him, I would  
not have been so fidius'd for all the chests in  
Corioli, and the gold that's in them. Is the 145  
Senate possess'd of this?

*Vol.* Good ladies, let's go. — Yes, yes, yes; the  
Senate has letters from the general, wherein he  
gives my son the whole name of the war. He  
hath in this action outdone his former deeds 150  
doubly.

*Val.* In troth, there's wondrous things spoke of  
him.

*Men.* Wondrous! ay, I warrant you, and not with-  
out his true purchasing. 155

*Vir.* The gods grant them true!

*Vol.* True! pow, wow.

*Men.* True! I'll be sworn they are true. Where is he wounded? [*To the Tribunes.*] God save your good worships! Marcius is coming 160 home; he has more cause to be proud. — Where is he wounded?

*Vol.* I' the shoulder and i' the left arm. There will be large cicatrices to show the people, when he shall stand for his place. He received in the repulse of Tarquin seven hurts i' 165 the body.

*Men.* One i' the neck, and two i' the thigh, — there's nine that I know.

*Vol.* He had, before this last expedition, twenty-five wounds upon him. 170

*Men.* Now it's twenty-seven; every gash was an enemy's grave. Hark! the trumpets.

[*A shout and flourish.*]

*Vol.* These are the ushers of Marcius; before him he carries noise, and behind him he leaves tears. 175 Death, that dark spirit, in 's nervy arm doth lie, Which, being advanc'd, declines, and then men die.

*A sennet. Trumpets sound. Enter Cominius the general, and Titus Lartius; between them, Coriolanus, crown'd with an oaken garland; with Captains and Soldiers, and a Herald.*

*Her.* Know, Rome, that all alone Marcius did fight  
 Within Corioli gates; where he hath won,      180  
 With fame, a name to Caius Marcius; these  
 In honour follows Coriolanus.

Welcome to Rome, renowned Coriolanus! *Flourish.*

*All.* Welcome to Rome, renowned Coriolanus!

*Cor.* No more of this; it does offend my heart.      185  
 Pray now, no more.

*Com.* Look, sir, your mother!

*Cor.* O,

You have, I know, petition'd all the gods  
 For my prosperity! *Kneels.*

*Vol.* Nay, my good soldier, up;  
 My gentle Marcius, worthy Caius, and  
 By deed-achieving honour newly nam'd, —      190  
 What is it? — Coriolanus must I call thee? —  
 But, O, thy wife!

*Cor.* My gracious silence, hail!

Wouldst thou have laugh'd had I come coffin'd  
 home,

That weep'st to see me triumph? Ah, my dear,  
 Such eyes the widows in Corioli wear,      195  
 And mothers that lack sons.

*Men.* Now, the gods crown thee!

*Cor.* And live you yet? [*To Valeria.*] O my sweet  
 lady, pardon.

*Vol.* I know not where to turn. O, welcome home;  
 And welcome, general; and you're welcome all.

*Men.* A hundred thousand welcomes ! I could weep  
And I could laugh, I am light and heavy. Wel-  
come ! 201

A curse begin at very root on 's heart,  
That is not glad to see thee ! You are three  
That Rome should dote on ; yet, by the faith of men,  
We have some old crab-trees here at home that  
will not 205

Be grafted to your relish. Yet welcome, warriors ;  
We call a nettle but a nettle and  
The faults of fools but folly.

*Com.* Ever right.

*Cor.* Menenius ever, ever.

*Her.* Give way there, and go on !

*Cor.* [*To Volumnia and Virgilia.*] Your hand, and  
yours. 210

Ere in our own house I do shade my head,  
The good patricians must be visited ;  
From whom I have receiv'd not only greetings,  
But with them change of honours.

*Vol.* I have lived  
To see inherited my very wishes 215  
And the buildings of my fancy ; only  
There's one thing wanting, which I doubt not but  
Our Rome will cast upon thee.

*Cor.* Know, good mother,  
I had rather be their servant in my way  
Than sway with them in theirs.

*Com.*    On, to the Capitol!

*Flourish. Cornets. Exeunt in state, as before.*

*Brutus and Sicinius [come forward].*

*Bru.* All tongues speak of him, and the bleared sights 221  
Are spectacled to see him. Your prattling nurse  
Into a rapture lets her baby cry

While she chats him; the kitchen Malkin pins  
Her richest lockram 'bout her reechy neck,    225  
Clamb'ring the walls to eye him; stalls, bulks,  
                                 windows,

Are smother'd up, leads fill'd, and ridges hors'd  
With variable complexions, all agreeing  
In earnestness to see him. Seld-shown flamens  
Do press among the popular throngs and puff 230  
To win a vulgar station; our veil'd dames  
Commit the war of white and damask in  
Their nicely-gawded cheeks to the wanton spoil  
Of Phœbus' burning kisses; — such a pother  
As if that whatsoever god who leads him    235  
Were slily crept into his human powers  
And gave him graceful posture.

*Sic.*    On the sudden,  
I warrant him consul.

*Bru.*    Then our office may,  
During his power, go sleep.

*Sic.* He cannot temperately transport his honours 240  
From where he should begin and end, but will  
Lose those he hath won.

*Bru.* In that there's comfort.

*Sic.* Doubt not

The commoners, for whom we stand, but they  
 Upon their ancient malice will forget  
 With the least cause these his new honours,  
 which 245

That he will give them make I as little question  
 As he is proud to do't.

*Bru.* I heard him swear,  
 Were he to stand for consul, never would he  
 Appear i' the market-place, nor on him put  
 The napless vesture of humility, 250  
 Nor, showing, as the manner is, his wounds  
 To the people, beg their stinking breaths.

*Sic.* 'Tis right.

*Bru.* It was his word. O, he would miss it rather  
 Than carry it but by the suit of the gentry to  
 him 254  
 And the desire of the nobles.

*Sic.* I wish no better  
 Than have him hold that purpose and to put it  
 In execution.

*Bru.* 'Tis most like he will.

*Sic.* It shall be to him then as our good wills,  
 A sure destruction.

*Bru.* So it must fall out  
 To him or our authorities for an end. 260  
 We must suggest the people in what hatred

He still hath held them ; that to's power he would  
Have made them mules, silenc'd their pleaders and  
Disproportioned their freedoms, holding them,  
In human action and capacity,             265  
Of no more soul nor fitness for the world  
Than camels in the war, who have their provand  
Only for bearing burdens, and sore blows  
For sinking under them.

*Sic.*                             This, as you say, suggested  
At some time when his soaring insolence             270  
Shall touch the people — which time shall not  
      want,  
If he be put upon't ; and that's as easy  
As to set dogs on sheep — will be his fire  
To kindle their dry stubble ; and their blaze  
Shall darken him for ever.

*Enter a Messenger.*

*Bru.*                             What's the matter ?

*Mess.* You are sent for to the Capitol. 'Tis  
      thought                             276  
That Marcius shall be consul.  
I have seen the dumb men throng to see him, and  
The blind to hear him speak. Matrons flung gloves.  
Ladies and maids their scarfs and handker-  
      chers,                             280  
Upon him as he pass'd ; the nobles bended,  
As to Jove's statue, and the commons made

A shower and thunder with their caps and shouts.  
I never saw the like.

*Bru.* Let's to the Capitol;  
And carry with us ears and eyes for the time, 285  
But hearts for the event.

*Sic.* Have with you.

*Exeunt.*

## SCENE II

[*The same.*] *The Capitol.*

*Enter two Officers, to lay cushions.*

1. *Off.* Come, come, they are almost here. How  
many stand for consulships?

2. *Off.* Three, they say; but 'tis thought of every  
one Coriolanus will carry it.

1. *Off.* That's a brave fellow; but he's vengeance 5  
proud, and loves not the common people.

2. *Off.* Faith, there hath been many great men  
that have flatter'd the people, who ne'er loved  
them; and there be many that they have 10  
loved, they know not wherefore; so that, if  
they love they know not why, they hate upon  
no better a ground. Therefore, for Coriolanus  
neither to care whether they love or hate him  
manifests the true knowledge he has in their 15  
disposition; and out of his noble carelessness  
lets them plainly see't.

1. *Off.* If he did not care whether he had their



love or no, he waved indifferently 'twixt doing them neither good nor harm; but he seeks their hate with greater devotion than they can render it him; and leaves nothing undone that may fully discover him their opposite. Now, to seem to affect the malice and displeasure of the people is as bad as that which he dislikes, to flatter them for their love. 20

2. *Off.* He hath deserved worthily of his country; and his ascent is not by such easy degrees as those who, having been supple and courteous to the people, bonneted, without any further deed to have them at all into their estimation and report. But he hath so planted his honours in their eyes, and his actions in their hearts, that for their tongues to be silent, and not confess so much, were a kind of ingrateful injury; to report otherwise were a malice, that, giving itself the lie, would pluck reproof and rebuke from every ear that heard it. 30

1. *Off.* No more of him; he's a worthy man. Make way, they are coming. 35

*A sennet. Enter, with Lictors before them, Cominius the consul, Menenius, Coriolanus, Senators, Sici-nius and Brutus. The Senators take their places; the Tribunes take their places by themselves. Corio-lanus stands.*

*Men.* Having determin'd of the Volsces and  
 To send for Titus Lartius, it remains,  
 As the main point of this our after-meeting,  
 To gratify his noble service that  
 Hath thus stood for his country ; therefore, please  
 you, 45

Most reverend and grave elders, to desire  
 The present consul and last general  
 In our well-found successes, to report  
 A little of that worthy work perform'd  
 By Caius Marcius Coriolanus, whom 50  
 We met here both to thank and to remember  
 With honours like himself. [*Coriolanus sits.*]

*1. Sen.* Speak, good Cominius :  
 Leave nothing out for length, and make us think  
 Rather our state's defective for requital  
 Than we to stretch it out. [*To the Tribunes.*]  
 Masters o' the people, 55  
 We do request your kindest ears, and after,  
 Your loving motion toward the common body  
 To yield what passes here.

*Sic.* We are convented  
 Upon a pleasing treaty, and have hearts  
 Inclined to honour and advance 60  
 The theme of our assembly.

*Bru.* Which the rather  
 We shall be blest to do, if he remember  
 A kinder value of the people than  
 He hath hereto priz'd them at.

- Men.* That's off, that's off ;  
I would you rather had been silent. Please you 65  
To hear Cominius speak ?
- Bru.* Most willingly ;  
But yet my caution was more pertinent  
Than the rebuke you give it.
- Men.* He loves your people ;  
But tie him not to be their bedfellow.  
Worthy Cominius, speak. (*Coriolanus rises and  
offers to go away.*) Nay, keep your place. 70
- 1. Sen.* Sit, Coriolanus ; never shame to hear  
What you have nobly done.
- Cor.* Your honours' pardon ;  
I had rather have my wounds to heal again  
Than hear say how I got them.
- Bru.* Sir, I hope  
My words disbench'd you not.
- Cor.* No, sir ; yet oft,  
When blows have made me stay, I fled from  
words. 76  
You sooth'd not, therefore hurt not ; but your  
people,  
I love them as they weigh.
- Men.* Pray now, sit down.
- Cor.* I had rather have one scratch my head i' the sun  
When the alarum were struck, than idly sit 80  
To hear my nothings monster'd. *Exit.*
- Men.* Masters of the people,

Your multiplying spawn how can he flatter —  
That's thousand to one good one — when you  
now see

He had rather venture all his limbs for honour  
Than one on's ears to hear it? Proceed, Co-  
minius. 85

*Com.* I shall lack voice; the deeds of Coriolanus  
Should not be utter'd feebly. It is held  
That valour is the chiefest virtue, and  
Most dignifies the haver; if it be,  
The man I speak of cannot in the world 90  
Be singly counterpois'd. At sixteen years,  
When Tarquin made a head for Rome, he fought  
Beyond the mark of others. Our then dictator,  
Whom with all praise I point at, saw him fight,  
When with his Amazonian chin he drove 95  
The bristled lips before him. He bestrid  
An o'er-press'd Roman, and i' the consul's view  
Slew three opposers. Tarquin's self he met,  
And struck him on his knee. In that day's feats,  
When he might act the woman in the scene, 100  
He prov'd best man i' the field, and for his meed  
Was brow-bound with the oak. His pupil age  
Man-ent'red thus, he waxed like a sea,  
And in the brunt of seventeen battles since  
He lurch'd all swords of the garland. For this  
last, 105  
Before and in Corioli, let me say,

I cannot speak him home. He stopp'd the fliers ;  
And by his rare example made the coward  
Turn terror into sport ; as weeds before  
A vessel under sail, so men obey'd                  110  
And fell below his stem. His sword, death's  
stamp,

Where it did mark, it took ; from face to foot  
He was a thing of blood, whose every motion  
Was tim'd with dying cries. Alone he ent'red  
The mortal gate of the city, which he painted    115  
With shunless destiny ; aidless came off,  
And with a sudden reinforcement struck  
Corioli like a planet ; now all's his.

When, by and by, the din of war 'gan pierce  
His ready sense, then straight his doubled spirit  
Re-quick'ned what in flesh was fatigate,                  121  
And to the battle came he, where he did  
Run reeking o'er the lives of men, as if  
'Twere a perpetual spoil ; and till we call'd  
Both field and city ours, he never stood                  125  
To ease his breast with panting.

*Men.*    Worthy man !

[1.] *Sen.* He cannot but with measure fit the honours  
Which we devise him.

*Com.*    Our spoils he kick'd at,  
And look'd upon things precious as they were  
The common muck of the world. He covets  
less    130

Than misery itself would give, rewards  
His deeds with doing them, and is content  
To spend the time to end it.

*Men.* He's right noble.

Let him be call'd for.

[1.] *Sen.* Call Coriolanus.

*Off.* He doth appear.

135

*Re-enter Coriolanus.*

*Men.* The Senate, Coriolanus, are well pleas'd  
To make thee consul.

*Cor.* I do owe them still

My life and services.

*Men.* It then remains

That you do speak to the people.

*Cor.* I do beseech you,

Let me o'erleap that custom ; for I cannot 140

Put on the gown, stand naked and entreat them,

For my wounds' sake, to give their suffrage.

Please you

That I may pass this doing.

*Sic.* Sir, the people

Must have their voices ; neither will they bate

One jot of ceremony.

*Men.* Put them not to't. 145

Pray you, go fit you to the custom and

Take to you, as your predecessors have,

Your honour with your form.

*Cor.*   It is a part  
That I shall blush in acting, and might well  
Be taken from the people.

*Bru.*   Mark you that?     150

*Cor.* To brag unto them, thus I did, and thus ;  
Show them the unaching scars which I should  
hide,  
As if I had receiv'd them for the hire  
Of their breath only !

*Men.*   Do not stand upon't.     154

We recommend to you, tribunes of the people,  
Our purpose to them ; and to our noble consul  
Wish we all joy and honour.

*Senators.* To Coriolanus come all joy and honour !

*Flourish of cornets. Exeunt all but Sicinius  
and Brutus.*

*Bru.* You see how he intends to use the people.

*Sic.* May they perceive's intent ! He will require  
    them,   160

As if he did contemn what he requested  
Should be in them to give.

*Bru.*   Come, we'll inform them  
Of our proceedings here. On the market-place,  
I know, they do attend us.                             *Exeunt.*

## SCENE III

[*The same. The Forum.*]

*Enter seven or eight Citizens.*

1. *Cit.* Once, if he do require our voices, we ought not to deny him.
2. *Cit.* We may, sir, if we will.
3. *Cit.* We have power in ourselves to do it, but it is a power that we have no power to do; 5  
for if he show us his wounds and tell us his deeds, we are to put our tongues into those wounds and speak for them; so, if he tell us his noble deeds, we must also tell him our noble acceptance of them. Ingratitude is mon- 10  
strous, and for the multitude to be ingrateful, were to make a monster of the multitude; of the which we being members, should bring ourselves to be monstrous members.
1. *Cit.* And to make us no better thought of, a 15  
little help will serve; for once we stood up about the corn, he himself stuck not to call us the many-headed multitude.
3. *Cit.* We have been called so of many; not that our heads are some brown, some black, some 20  
auburn, some bald, but that our wits are so diversely colour'd; and truly I think if all our wits were to issue out of one skull, they would



fly east, west, north, south, and their consent  
of one direct way should be at once to all the 25  
points o' the compass.

2. *Cit.* Think you so? Which way do you judge  
my wit would fly?

3. *Cit.* Nay, your wit will not so soon out as an-  
other man's will, 'tis strongly wedg'd up in a 30  
block-head; but if it were at liberty, 'twould,  
sure, southward.

2. *Cit.* Why that way?

3. *Cit.* To lose itself in a fog, where being three  
parts melted away with rotten dews, the fourth 35  
would return for conscience' sake, to help to  
get thee a wife.

2. *Cit.* You are never without your tricks; you  
may, you may.

3. *Cit.* Are you all resolv'd to give your voices? 40  
But that's no matter, the greater part carries  
it. I say, if he would incline to the people,  
there was never a worthier man.

*Enter Coriolanus in a gown of humility, with Menenius.*

Here he comes, and in the gown of humility;  
mark his behaviour. We are not to stay all 45  
together, but to come by him where he stands,  
by ones, by twos, and by threes. He's to  
make his requests by particulars, wherein

every one of us has a single honour, in giving him our own voices with our own tongues; 50 therefore follow me, and I'll direct you how you shall go by him.

*All.* Content, content. *[Exeunt citizens.]*

*Men.* O sir, you are not right. Have you not known The worthiest men have done't?

*Cor.* What must I say?  
I pray, sir, — Plague upon't! I cannot bring 56  
My tongue to such a pace, — look, sir, my wounds!  
I got them in my country's service, when  
Some certain of your brethren roar'd and ran  
From the noise of our own drums.

*Men.* O me, the gods!  
You must not speak of that. You must desire  
                  them 61  
To think upon you.

*Cor.* Think upon me! Hang 'em!  
I would they would forget me, like the virtues  
Which our divines lose by 'em.

*Men.* You'll mar all.  
I'll leave you. Pray you, speak to 'em, I pray  
                  you, 65  
In wholesome manner. *Exit.*

*Re-enter three of the Citizens.*

*Cor.* Bid them wash their faces

And keep their teeth clean. So, here comes a  
brace. —

You know the cause, sir, of my standing here.

3. *Cit.* We do, sir; tell us what hath brought you  
to't. 70

*Cor.* Mine own desert.

2. *Cit.* Your own desert!

*Cor.* Ay, not mine own desire.

3. *Cit.* How not your own desire?

*Cor.* No, sir, 'twas never my desire yet to trouble  
the poor with begging. 75

3. *Cit.* You must think, if we give you anything,  
we hope to gain by you.

*Cor.* Well then, I pray, your price o' the consul-  
ship? 80

1. *Cit.* The price is to ask it kindly.

*Cor.* Kindly! Sir, I pray, let me ha't. I have  
wounds to show you, which shall be yours in  
private. Your good voice, sir; what say you?

2. *Cit.* You shall ha' it, worthy sir. 85

*Cor.* A match, sir. There's in all two worthy  
voices begg'd. I have your alms; adieu.

3. *Cit.* But this is something odd.

2. *Cit.* An 'twere to give again, — but 'tis no  
matter. 89

*Exeunt [the three Citizens].*

*Re-enter two other Citizens.*

*Cor.* Pray you now, if it may stand with the tune

of your voices that I may be consul, I have here the customary gown.

[4.] *Cit.* You have deserved nobly of your country, and you have not deserved nobly. 95

*Cor.* Your enigma?

[4.] *Cit.* You have been a scourge to her enemies, you have been a rod to her friends; you have not indeed loved the common people.

*Cor.* You should account me the more virtuous 100 that I have not been common in my love. I will, sir, flatter my sworn brother, the people, to earn a dearer estimation of them; 'tis a condition they account gentle. And since the wisdom of their choice is rather to have my hat 105 than my heart, I will practise the insinuating nod and be off to them most counterfeitly; that is, sir, I will counterfeit the bewitchment of some popular man and give it bountiful to the desirers. Therefore, beseech you, I may be consul. 110

[5.] *Cit.* We hope to find you our friend; and therefore give you our voices heartily.

[4.] *Cit.* You have received many wounds for your country.

*Cor.* I will not seal your knowledge with showing 115 them. I will make much of your voices, and so trouble you no further.

*Both Cit.* The gods give you joy, sir, heartily! [*Exeunt.*]

*Cor.* Most sweet voices !

Better it is to die, better to starve, 120  
 Than crave the hire which first we do deserve.  
 Why in this woolless toge should I stand here,  
 To beg of Hob and Dick, that do appear,  
 Their needless vouches ? Custom calls me to't.  
 What custom wills, in all things should we do't,  
 The dust on antique time would lie unswept, 126  
 And mountainous error be too highly heapt  
 For truth to o'er-peer. Rather than fool it so,  
 Let the high office and the honour go  
 To one that would do thus. — I am half  
                   through ; 130  
 The one part suffered, the other will I do.

*Re-enter three Citizens more.*

Here come moe voices. —

Your voices ! For your voices I have fought ;  
 Watch'd for your voices ; for your voices bear  
 Of wounds two dozen odd ; battles thrice six 135  
 I have seen and heard of ; for your voices have  
 Done many things, some less, some more. Your  
                   voices.

Indeed, I would be consul.

[6.] *Cit.* He has done nobly, and cannot go with-  
 out any honest man's voice. 140

[7.] *Cit.* Therefore let him be consul. The gods

give him joy, and make him good friend to the  
people!

*All Cit.* Amen, amen. God save thee, noble consul!  
*Exeunt.*

*Cor.* Worthy voices! 145

*Re-enter Menenius, with Brutus and Sicinius.*

*Men.* You have stood your limitation, and the trib-  
unes

Endue you with the people's voice. Remains  
That, in the official marks invested, you  
Anon do meet the Senate.

*Cor.* Is this done?

*Sic.* The custom of request you have discharg'd. 150  
The people do admit you, and are summon'd  
To meet anon upon your approbation.

*Cor.* Where? At the Senate-house?

*Sic.* There, Coriolanus.

*Cor.* May I change these garments?

*Sic.* You may, sir.

*Cor.* That I'll straight do; and, knowing myself  
again, 155

Repair to the Senate-house.

*Men.* I'll keep you company. Will you along?

*Bru.* We stay here for the people.

*Sic.* Fare you well.

*Exeunt Coriolanus and Menenius.*

He has it now, and by his looks methinks  
'Tis warm at 's heart.

160

*Bru.* With a proud heart he wore his humble weeds.  
Will you dismiss the people ?

*Re-enter Citizens.*

*Sic.* How now, my masters ! have you chose this man ?

1. *Cit.* He has our voices, sir.

*Bru.* We pray the gods he may deserve your loves. 165

2. *Cit.* Amen, sir. To my poor unworthy notice,  
He mock'd us when he begg'd our voices.

3. *Cit.* Certainly  
He flouted us downright.

1. *Cit.* No, 'tis his kind of speech ; he did not mock us.

2. *Cit.* Not one amongst us, save yourself, but says 170  
He us'd us scornfully. He should have show'd  
us

His marks of merit, wounds receiv'd for 's country.

*Sic.* Why, so he did, I am sure.

*All.* No, no ; no man saw 'em.

3. *Cit.* He said he had wounds, which he could show  
in private ;

And with his hat, thus waving it in scorn, 175

"I would be consul," says he ; "aged custom,

But by your voices, will not so permit me ;

Your voices therefore." When we granted that,

Here was "I thank you for your voices ; thank

you ;

Your most sweet voices. Now you have left your  
 voices, 180

I have no further with you." Was not this  
 mockery?

*Sic.* Why either were you ignorant to see't,  
 Or, seeing it, of such childish friendliness  
 To yield your voices?

*Bru.* Could you not have told him  
 As you were lesson'd : when he had no power, 185  
 But was a petty servant to the state,  
 He was your enemy, ever spake against  
 Your liberties and the charters that you bear  
 I' the body of the weal ; and now, arriving  
 A place of potency and sway o' the state, 190  
 If he should still malignantly remain  
 Fast foe to the *plebeii*, your voices might  
 Be curses to yourselves? You should have said  
 That as his worthy deeds did claim no less  
 Than what he stood for, so his gracious nature 195  
 Would think upon you for your voices and  
 Translate his malice towards you into love,  
 Standing your friendly lord.

*Sic.* Thus to have said,  
 As you were fore-advis'd, had touch'd his spirit  
 And tried his inclination ; from him pluck'd 200  
 Either his gracious promise, which you might,  
 As cause had call'd you up, have held him to ;  
 Or else it would have gall'd his surly nature,



Which easily endures not article  
 Tying him to aught ; so putting him to rage, 205  
 You should have ta'en the advantage of his choler  
 And pass'd him unelected.

*Bru.* Did you perceive  
 He did solicit you in free contempt  
 When he did need your loves, and do you think  
 That his contempt shall not be bruising to you, 210  
 When he hath power to crush? Why, had your  
 bodies  
 No heart among you? Or had you tongues to cry  
 Against the rectorship of judgement?

*Sic.* Have you  
 Ere now deni'd the asker, and now again  
 Of him that did not ask, but mock, bestow 215  
 Your sued-for tongues?

3. *Cit.* He's not confirm'd ; we may deny him yet.

2. *Cit.* And will deny him.

I'll have five hundred voices of that sound.

1. *Cit.* I twice five hundred and their friends to piece  
 'em. 220

*Bru.* Get you hence instantly, and tell those friends,  
 They have chose a consul that will from them take  
 Their liberties, make them of no more voice  
 Than dogs, that are as often beat for barking  
 As therefore kept to do so.

*Sic.* Let them assemble,  
 And on a safer judgement all revoke 226

Your ignorant election. Enforce his pride,  
 And his old hate unto you ; besides, forget not  
 With what contempt he wore the humble weed,  
 How in his suit he scorn'd you ; but your loves, 230  
 Thinking upon his services, took from you  
 The apprehension of his present portance,  
 Which most gibingly, ungravely, he did fashion  
 After the inveterate hate he bears you.

*Bru.*

Lay

A fault on us, your tribunes, that we labour'd, 235  
 No impediment between, but that you must  
 Cast your election on him.

*Sic.*

Say, you chose him

More after our commandment than as guided  
 By your own true affections, and that your minds,  
 Pre-occupi'd with what you rather must do 240  
 Than what you should, made you against the  
 grain

To voice him consul. Lay the fault on us.

*Bru.* Ay, spare us not. Say we read lectures to you,  
 How youngly he began to serve his country,  
 How long continued, and what stock he springs  
 of, — 245

The noble house o' the Marcians, from whence  
 came

That Ancus Marcius, Numa's daughter's son,  
 Who, after great Hostilius, here was king ;  
 Of the same house Publius and Quintus were,

That our best water brought by conduits  
hither ; 250

[And Censorinus, nobly named so,  
Twice being by the people chosen censor,]  
Was his great ancestor.

*Sic.* One thus descended,  
That hath beside well in his person wrought  
To be set high in place, we did commend 255  
To your remembrances ; but you have found,  
Scaling his present bearing with his past,  
That he's your fixed enemy, and revoke  
Your sudden approbation.

*Bru.* Say, you ne'er had done't —  
Harp on that still — but by our putting on ; 260  
And presently, when you have drawn your number,  
Repair to the Capitol.

*All.* We will so. Almost all  
Repent in their election. *Exeunt Citizens.*

*Bru.* Let them go on ;  
This mutiny were better put in hazard,  
Than stay, past doubt, for greater. 265  
If, as his nature is, he fall in rage  
With their refusal, both observe and answer  
The vantage of his anger.

*Sic.* To the Capitol, come.  
We will be there before the stream o' the people ;  
And this shall seem, as partly 'tis, their own, 270  
Which we have goaded onward. *Exeunt.*

## ACT THIRD

### SCENE I

[*Rome. A street.*]

*Cornets. Enter Coriolanus, Menenius, all the Gentry, Cominius, Titus Lartius, and other Senators.*

*Cor.* Tullus Aufidius then had made new head?

*Lart.* He had, my lord; and that it was which caus'd  
Our swifter composition.

*Cor.* So then the Volsces stand but as at first,  
Ready, when time shall prompt them, to make  
road 5  
Upon 's again.

*Com.* They are worn, Lord Consul, so,  
That we shall hardly in our ages see  
Their banners wave again.

*Cor.* Saw you Aufidius?

*Lart.* On safe-guard he came to me, and did curse  
Against the Volsces, for they had so vilely 10  
Yielded the town. He is retired to Antium.

*Cor.* Spoke he of me?

*Lart.* He did, my lord.

*Cor.* How? What?

*Lart.* How often he had met you, sword to sword;

That of all things upon the earth he hated  
Your person most ; that he would pawn his for-  
tunes 15

To hopeless restitution, so he might  
Be call'd your vanquisher.

*Cor.* At Antium lives he ?

*Lart.* At Antium.

*Cor.* I wish I had a cause to seek him there,  
To oppose his hatred fully. Welcome home. 20

*Enter Sicinius and Brutus.*

Behold, these are the tribunes of the people,  
The tongues o' the common mouth. I do despise  
them,

For they do prank them in authority,  
Against all noble sufferance.

*Sic.* Pass no further.

*Cor.* Ha ! what is that ? 25

*Bru.* It will be dangerous to go on. No further.

*Cor.* What makes this change ?

*Men.* The matter ?

*Com.* Hath he not pass'd the noble and the common ?

*Bru.* Cominius, no.

*Cor.* Have I had children's voices ? 30

[1.] *Sen.* Tribunes, give way ; he shall to the market-  
place.

*Bru.* The people are incens'd against him.

*Sic.* Stop,  
Or all will fall in broil.

*Cor.* Are these your herd?  
Must these have voices, that can yield them now  
And straight disclaim their tongues? What are  
your offices? 35  
You being their mouths, why rule you not their  
teeth?  
Have you not set them on?

*Men.* Be calm, be calm.

*Cor.* It is a purpos'd thing, and grows by plot,  
To curb the will of the nobility.  
Suffer 't, and live with such as cannot rule 40  
Nor ever will be ruled.

*Bru.* Call 't not a plot.  
The people cry you mock'd them, and of late,  
When corn was given them gratis, you repin'd,  
Scandal'd the suppliants for the people, call'd  
them  
Time-pleasers, flatterers, foes to nobleness. 45

*Cor.* Why, this was known before.

*Bru.* Not to them all.

*Cor.* Have you inform'd them sithence?

*Bru.* How! I inform them!

*Com.* You are like to do such business.

*Bru.* Not unlike,  
Each way, to better yours.

*Cor.* Why then should I be consul? By yond clouds,

Let me deserve so ill as you, and make me     51  
Your fellow tribune.

*Sic.*                             You show too much of that  
For which the people stir. If you will pass  
To where you are bound, you must inquire your  
way,

Which you are out of, with a gentler spirit,     55  
Or never be so noble as a consul,  
Nor yoke with him for tribune.

*Men.*                             Let's be calm.

*Com.* The people are abus'd; set on. This palt'ring  
Becomes not Rome, nor has Coriolanus  
Deserv'd this so dishonour'd rub, laid falsely     60  
I' the plain way of his merit.

*Cor.*                             Tell me of corn!  
This was my speech, and I will speak't again —

*Men.* Not now, not now.

[*1.*] *Sen.*                     Not in this heat, sir, now.

*Cor.* Now, as I live, I will. My nobler friends,  
I crave their pardons;     65  
For the mutable, rank-scented many, let them  
Regard me as I do not flatter, and  
Therein behold themselves. I say again,  
In soothing them we nourish 'gainst our Senate  
The cockle of rebellion, insolence, sedition,     70  
Which we ourselves have plough'd for, sow'd,  
and scatter'd,  
By mingling them with us, the honour'd number,

Who lack not virtue, no, nor power, but that  
Which they have given to beggars.

*Men.* Well, no more.

[1.] *Sen.* No more words, we beseech you.

*Cor.* How! no more!

As for my country I have shed my blood, 76  
Not fearing outward force, so shall my lungs  
Coin words till their decay against those measles,  
Which we disdain should tetter us, yet sought  
The very way to catch them.

*Bru.* You speak o' the people  
As if you were a god to punish, not 81  
A man of their infirmity.

*Sic.* 'Twere well  
We let the people know't.

*Men.* What, what? his choler?

*Cor.* Choler!  
Were I as patient as the midnight sleep, 85  
By Jove, 'twould be my mind!

*Sic.* It is a mind  
That shall remain a poison where it is,  
Not poison any further.

*Cor.* Shall remain!  
Hear you this Triton of the minnows? Mark  
you  
His absolute "shall"?

*Com.* 'Twas from the canon.

*Cor.* "Shall"!



O good but most unwise patricians ! why,      91  
You grave but reckless senators, have you thus  
Given Hydra here to choose an officer,  
That with his peremptory "shall," being but  
The horn and noise o' the monster's, wants not  
    spirit      95

To say he'll turn your current in a ditch,  
And make your channel his ? If he have power,  
Then vail your ignorance ; if none, awake  
Your dangerous lenity. If you are learn'd,  
Be not as common fools ; if you are not,      100  
Let them have cushions by you. You are ple-  
    beians,

If they be senators ; and they are no less,  
When, both your voices blended, the great'st  
    taste

Most palates theirs. They choose their magis-  
    trate,

And such a one as he, who puts his "shall,"      105  
His popular "shall," against a graver bench  
Than ever frown'd in Greece. By Jove himself !  
It makes the consuls base ; and my soul aches  
To know, when two authorities are up,  
Neither supreme, how soon confusion      110  
May enter 'twixt the gap of both and take  
The one by the other.

*Com.*      Well, on to the market-place.

*Cor.* Whoever gave that counsel, to give forth

The corn o' the storehouse gratis, as 'twas us'd  
Sometime in Greece, —

*Men.*                                 Well, well, no more of that.

*Cor.* Though there the people had more absolute  
power,     116

I say, they nourish'd disobedience, fed  
The ruin of the state.

*Bru.*                                         Why, shall the people give  
One that speaks thus their voice?

*Cor.*     I'll give my reasons,  
More worthier than their voices. They know the  
corn     120

Was not our recompense, resting well assur'd  
That ne'er did service for't; being press'd to the  
war,

Even when the navel of the state was touch'd,  
They would not thread the gates. This kind of  
service     124

Did not deserve corn gratis. Being i' the war,  
Their mutinies and revolts, wherein they show'd  
Most valour, spoke not for them. The accusation

Which they have often made against the Senate,  
All cause unborn, could never be the motive  
Of our so frank donation. Well, what then?     130

How shall this bisson multitude digest  
The Senate's courtesy? Let deeds express  
What's like to be their words: "We did request  
it;

We are the greater poll, and in true fear      134  
They gave us our demands." Thus we debase  
The nature of our seats and make the rabble  
Call our cares fears ; which will in time  
Break ope the locks o' the Senate and bring in  
The crows to peck the eagles.

*Men.*      Come, enough.

*Bru.* Enough, with over-measure.

*Cor.*      No, take more !

What may be sworn by, both divine and  
human,      141

Seal what I end withal ! This double worship,  
Where one part does disdain with cause, the other  
Insult without all reason, where gentry, title,  
wisdom,

Cannot conclude but by the yea and no      145

Of general ignorance, — it must omit  
Real necessities, and give way the while  
To unstable slightness ; purpose so barr'd, it follows  
Nothing is done to purpose. Therefore, beseech  
you, —

You that will be less fearful than discreet,      150

That love the fundamental part of state  
More than you doubt the change on't, that prefer  
A noble life before a long, and wish

To jump a body with a dangerous physic  
That's sure of death without it, at once pluck  
out      155

The multitudinous tongue ; let them not lick  
 The sweet which is their poison. Your dishonour  
 Mangles true judgement and bereaves the state  
 Of that integrity which should become't,  
 Not having the power to do the good it would, 160  
 For the ill which doth control't.

*Bru.* Has said enough.

*Sic.* Has spoken like a traitor, and shall answer  
 As traitors do.

*Cor.* Thou wretch, despite o'erwhelm thee !  
 What should the people do with these bald trib-  
 unes ? 165

On whom depending, their obedience fails  
 To the greater bench. In a rebellion,  
 When what's not meet, but what must be, was  
 law,

Then were they chosen ; in a better hour,  
 Let what is meet be said it must be meet, 170  
 And throw their power i' the dust.

*Bru.* Manifest treason !

*Sic.* This a consul ? No !

*Bru.* The ædiles, ho !

*Enter an Ædile.*

— Let him be apprehended.

*Sic.* Go, call the people ; [*Exit Ædile*] in whose name  
 myself

Attach thee as a traitorous innovator, 175



[*Citizens.*] Let's hear our tribune; peace! Speak,  
 speak, speak!

*Sic.* You are at point to lose your liberties.

Marcus would have all from you; Marcus, 195  
 Whom late you have nam'd for consul.

*Men.* Fie, fie, fie!

This is the way to kindle, not to quench.

[1.] *Sen.* To unbuild the city and to lay all flat.

*Sic.* What is the city but the people?

[*Citizens.*] True,

The people are the city. 200

*Bru.* By the consent of all, we were establish'd  
 The people's magistrates.

[*Citizens.*] You so remain.

*Men.* And so are like to do.

*Com.* That is the way to lay the city flat,

To bring the roof to the foundation 205

And bury all, which yet distinctly ranges,

In heaps and piles of ruin.

*Sic.* This deserves death.

*Bru.* Or let us stand to our authority,

Or let us lose it. We do here pronounce,

Upon the part o' the people, in whose power 210

We were elected theirs, Marcus is worthy

Of present death.

*Sic.* Therefore lay hold of him;

Bear him to the rock Tarpeian, and from thence

Into destruction cast him.

- Bru.*    *Ædiles, seize him !*
- [*Citizens.*] Yield, Marcius, yield !
- Men.*    Hear me one word ;  
Beseech you, tribunes, hear me but a word.    216
- Æd.* Peace, peace !
- Men.* [*To Brutus.*] Be that you seem, truly your  
country's friend,  
And temperately proceed to what you would  
Thus violently redress.
- Bru.*    Sir, those cold ways    220  
That seem like prudent helps are very poisonous  
Where the disease is violent. Lay hands upon him,  
And bear him to the rock.
- Cor.*    No, I'll die here.  
   *Drawing his sword.*  
There's some among you have beheld me fighting ;  
Come, try upon yourselves what you have seen  
me.    225
- Men.* Down with that sword ! Tribunes, withdraw  
a while.
- Bru.* Lay hands upon him.
- Com.*    Help Marcius, help ;  
You that be noble, help him, young and old !
- [*Citizens.*] Down with him, down with him !  
   *In this mutiny, the Tribunes, the Ædiles,*  
   *and the People, are beat in.*
- Men.* Go, get you to your house ; begone, away !    230  
All will be nought else.

2. *Sen.* Get you gone.

*Com.* Stand fast ;

We have as many friends as enemies.

*Men.* Shall it be put to that ?

[1.] *Sen.* The gods forbid !

I prithee, noble friend, home to thy house ;

Leave us to cure this cause.

*Men.* For 'tis a sore upon us, 235

You cannot tent yourself. Begone, beseech you.

*Com.* Come, sir, along with us.

*Cor.* I would they were barbarians — as they are,  
Though in Rome litter'd — not Romans — as they  
are not,

Though calved i' the porch o' the Capitol !

[*Men*] Begone !

Put not your worthy rage into your tongue ; 241

One time will owe another.

*Cor.* On fair ground

I could beat forty of them.

*Men.* I could myself

Take up a brace of the best of them ; yea, the  
two tribunes.

*Com.* But now 'tis odds beyond arithmetic ; 245

And manhood is call'd foolery, when it stands

Against a falling fabric. Will you hence

Before the tag return, whose rage doth rend

Like interrupted waters, and o'erbear

What they are us'd to bear ?



*Men.* Pray you, begone.  
I'll try whether my old wit be in request      251  
With those that have but little. This must be  
    patch'd.  
With cloth of any colour.

*Com.* Nay, come away.  
    *Exeunt Coriolanus, Cominius [and others].*

*A Patrician.* This man has marr'd his fortune.

*Men.* His nature is too noble for the world ;      255  
He would not flatter Neptune for his trident,  
Or Jove for 's power to thunder. His heart's his  
    mouth ;

What his breast forges, that his tongue must vent ;  
And, being angry, does forget that ever      259  
He heard the name of death.      *A noise within.*  
Here's goodly work !

*A Patrician.* I would they were a-bed !

*Men.* I would they were in Tiber ! What the ven-  
    geance !  
Could he not speak 'em fair ?

*Re-enter Brutus and Sicinius, with the rabble.*

*Sic.* Where is this viper  
That would depopulate the city and  
Be every man himself ?

*Men.* You worthy tribunes, —

*Sic.* He shall be thrown down the Tarpeian rock 266  
With rigorous hands. He hath resisted law,

And therefore law shall scorn him further trial  
 Than the severity of the public power  
 Which he so sets at nought.

1. *Cit.* He shall well know  
 The noble tribunes are the people's mouths, 271  
 And we their hands.

[*Citizens.*] He shall, sure on't.

*Men.* Sir, sir, —

*Sic.* Peace!

*Men.* Do not cry havoc, where you should but hunt 275  
 With modest warrant.

*Sic.* Sir, how comes't that you  
 Have help to make this rescue?

*Men.* Hear me speak.  
 As I do know the consul's worthiness,  
 So can I name his faults, —

*Sic.* Consul! what consul?

*Men.* The consul Coriolanus.

*Bru.* He consul! 280

[*Citizens.*] No, no, no, no, no.

*Men.* If, by the tribunes' leave, and yours, good people,  
 I may be heard, I would crave a word or two;  
 The which shall turn you to no further harm  
 Than so much loss of time.

*Sic.* Speak briefly then;  
 For we are peremptory to dispatch 286  
 This viperous traitor. To eject him hence  
 Were but one danger, and to keep him here



This tiger-footed rage, when it shall find  
 The harm of unscann'd swiftmess, will too late  
 Tie leaden pounds to 's heels. Proceed by process,  
 Lest parties, as he is belov'd, break out, 315  
 And sack great Rome with Romans.

*Bru.* If it were so, —

*Sic.* What do ye talk?

Have we not had a taste of his obedience?  
 Our ædiles smote? ourselves resisted? Come.

*Men.* Consider this: he has been bred i' the wars 320  
 Since 'a could draw a sword, and is ill school'd  
 In bolted language; meal and bran together  
 He throws without distinction. Give me leave;  
 I'll go to him, and undertake to bring him  
 Where he shall answer, by a lawful form, 325  
 In peace, to his utmost peril.

*1. Sen.* Noble tribunes,  
 It is the humane way. The other course  
 Will prove too bloody, and the end of it  
 Unknown to the beginning.

*Sic.* Noble Menenius,  
 Be you then as the people's officer. 330  
 Masters, lay down your weapons.

*Bru.* Go not home.

*Sic.* Meet on the market-place. We'll attend you  
 there;  
 Where, if you bring not Marcius, we'll proceed  
 In our first way.



Why did you wish me milder? Would you have  
me

False to my nature? Rather say I play 15  
The man I am.

*Vol.* O, sir, sir, sir,  
I would have had you put your power well on,  
Before you had worn it out.

*Cor.* Let go.

*Vol.* You might have been enough the man you are,  
With striving less to be so. Lesser had been 20  
The thwartings of your dispositions, if  
You had not show'd them how ye were dispos'd,  
Ere they lack'd power to cross you.

*Cor.* Let them hang!

*Vol.* Ay, and burn too.

*Enter Menenius with the Senators.*

*Men.* Come, come, you have been too rough, some-  
thing too rough; 25

You must return and mend it.

[1.] *Sen.* There's no remedy;  
Unless, by not so doing, our good city  
Cleave in the midst, and perish.

*Vol.* Pray, be counsell'd.  
I have a heart as little apt as yours,  
But yet a brain that leads my use of anger 30  
To better vantage.

*Men.*                             Well said, noble woman !  
 Before he should thus stoop to the herd, but that  
 The violent fit o' the time craves it as physic  
 For the whole state, I would put mine armour  
                                         on,  
 Which I can scarcely bear.

*Cor.*     What must I do ? 35

*Men.* Return to the tribunes.

*Cor.*     Well, what then ? what then ?

*Men.* Repent what you have spoke.

*Cor.* For them ! I cannot do it to the gods ;  
 Must I then do't to them ?

*Vol.*     You are too absolute ;  
 Though therein you can never be too noble,     40  
 But when extremities speak. I have heard you say  
 Honour and policy, like unsever'd friends,  
 ' I' the war do grow together. Grant that, and  
                                         tell me

In peace what each of them by the other lose  
 That they combine not there.

*Cor.*     Tush, tush !

*Men.*     A good demand.

*Vol.* If it be honour in your wars to seem             46  
 The same you are not, which, for your best ends,  
 You adopt your policy, how is it less or worse  
 That it shall hold companionship in peace  
 With honour, as in war, since that to both     50  
 It stands in like request ?

*Cor.* Why force you this ?

*Vol.* Because that now it lies you on to speak  
 To the people ; not by your own instruction,  
 Nor by the matter which your heart prompts you,  
 But with such words that are but roted in 55  
 Your tongue, though but bastards and syllables  
 Of no allowance to your bosom's truth.  
 Now, this no more dishonours you at all  
 Than to take in a town with gentle words,  
 Which else would put you to your fortune and  
 The hazard of much blood. 61  
 I would dissemble with my nature where  
 My fortunes and my friends at stake requir'd  
 I should do so in honour. I am in this,  
 Your wife, your son, these senators, the nobles ; 65  
 And you will rather show our general louts  
 How you can frown, than spend a fawn upon 'em  
 For the inheritance of their loves and safeguard  
 Of what that want might ruin.

*Men.* Noble lady !

Come, go with us ; speak fair. You may salve  
 so, 70  
 Not what is dangerous present, but the loss  
 Of what is past.

*Vol.* I prithee now, my son,  
 Go to them, with this bonnet in thy hand ;  
 And thus far having stretch'd it — here be with  
 them —



Thy knee bussing the stones — for in such busi-  
ness 75

Action is eloquence, and the eyes of the ignorant  
More learned than the ears — waving thy head,  
Which often thus correcting thy stout heart,  
Now humble as the ripest mulberry  
That will not hold the handling: — or say to  
them, 80

Thou art their soldier, and being bred in broils  
Hast not the soft way which, thou dost confess,  
Were fit for thee to use as they to claim,  
In asking their good loves, but thou wilt frame  
Thyself, forsooth, hereafter theirs, so far 85  
As thou hast power and person.

*Men.*                                 This but done,  
Even as she speaks, why, their hearts were yours;  
For they have pardons, being ask'd, as free  
As words to little purpose.

*Vol.*                                 Prithee now,  
Go, and be rul'd; although I know thou hadst  
rather 90  
Follow thine enemy in a fiery gulf  
Than flatter him in a bower.

*Enter Cominius.*

Here is Cominius.

*Com.* I have been i' the market-place; and, sir, 'tis  
fit

You make strong party, or defend yourself  
By calmness or by absence. All's in anger. 95

*Men.* Only fair speech.

*Com.* I think 'twill serve, if he  
Can thereto frame his spirit.

*Vol.* He must, and will.  
Prithee now, say you will, and go about it.

*Cor.* Must I go show them my unbarb'd sconce?  
Must I

With my base tongue give to my noble heart 100  
A lie that it must bear? Well, I will do't;  
Yet, were there but this single plot to lose,  
This mould of Marcius, they to dust should grind  
it

And throw't against the wind. To the market-  
place!

You have put me now to such a part which  
never 105

I shall discharge to the life.

*Com.* Come, come, we'll prompt you.

*Vol.* I prithee now, sweet son, as thou hast said  
My praises made thee first a soldier, so,  
To have my praise for this, perform a part  
Thou hast not done before.

*Cor.* Well, I must do't.

Away, my disposition, and possess me 111  
Some harlot's spirit! My throat of war be turn'd,  
Which choir'd with my drum, into a pipe



Or never trust to what my tongue can do  
I' the way of flattery further.

*Vol.* Do your will.

*Exit.*

*Com.* Away! the tribunes do attend you. Arm yourself  
To answer mildly; for they are prepar'd  
With accusations, as I hear, more strong 140  
Than are upon you yet.

*Cor.* The word is "mildly." Pray you, let us go.  
Let them accuse me by invention, I  
Will answer in mine honour.

*Men.* Ay, but mildly.

*Cor.* Well, mildly be it then. Mildly! 145

*Exeunt.*

### SCENE III

[*The same. The Forum.*]

*Enter Sicinius and Brutus.*

*Bru.* In this point charge him home, that he affects  
Tyrannical power. If he evade us there,  
Enforce him with his envy to the people,  
And that the spoil got on the Antiates  
Was ne'er distributed.

*Enter an Ædile.*

What, will he come? 5

*Æd.* He's coming.

*Bru.* How accompanied?

*Æd.* With old Menenius, and those senators  
That always favour'd him.

*Sic.* Have you a catalogue  
Of all the voices that we have procur'd  
Set down by the poll?

*Æd.* I have; 'tis ready. 10

*Sic.* Have you collected them by tribes?

*Æd.* I have.

*Sic.* Assemble presently the people hither;  
And when they hear me say, "It shall be so  
I' the right and strength o' the commons," be it  
either 14

For death, for fine, or banishment, then let them,  
If I say fine, cry "Fine!" if death, cry "Death!"  
Insisting on the old prerogative  
And power i' the truth o' the cause.

*Æd.* I shall inform them.

*Bru.* And when such time they have begun to cry,  
Let them not cease, but with a din confus'd 20  
Enforce the present execution  
Of what we chance to sentence.

*Æd.* Very well.

*Sic.* Make them be strong and ready for this hint,  
When we shall hap to give't them.

*Bru.* Go about it.

[Exit *Ædile*.]

Put him to choler straight. He hath been us'd 25  
Ever to conquer, and to have his worth

Of contradiction. Being once chaf'd, he cannot  
 Be rein'd again to temperance ; then he speaks  
 What's in his heart, and that is there which looks  
 With us to break his neck.

*Enter Coriolanus, Menenius, and Cominius, with others*  
*[Senators and Patricians].*

*Sic.* Well, here he comes:

*Men.* Calmly, I do beseech you. 31

*Cor.* Ay, as an ostler, that for the poorest piece  
 Will bear the knave by the volume. The hon-  
 our'd gods  
 Keep Rome in safety, and the chairs of justice  
 Supplied with worthy men ! plant love among's !  
 Throng our large temples with the shows of  
 peace, 36  
 And not our streets with war !

*1. Sen.* Amen, amen.

*Men.* A noble wish.

*Re-enter Ædile, with Citizens.*

*Sic.* Draw near, ye people.

*Æd.* List to your tribunes. Audience ! peace, I say ! 40

*Cor.* First, hear me speak.

*Both Tri.* Well, say. Peace, ho !

*Cor.* Shall I be charg'd no further than this present ?  
 Must all determine here ?

*Sic.* I do demand

If you submit you to the people's voices,  
Allow their officers, and are content 45  
To suffer lawful censure for such faults  
As shall be prov'd upon you?

*Cor.* I am content.

*Men.* Lo, citizens, he says he is content.

The warlike service he has done, consider; think  
Upon the wounds his body bears, which show 50  
Like graves i' the holy churchyard.

*Cor.* Scratches with briers,  
Scars to move laughter only.

*Men.* Consider further,  
That when he speaks not like a citizen,  
You find him like a soldier. Do not take  
His rougher accents for malicious sounds, 55  
But, as I say, such as become a soldier  
Rather than envy you.

*Com.* Well, well, no more.

*Cor.* What is the matter  
That being pass'd for consul with full voice,  
I am so dishonour'd that the very hour 60  
You take it off again?

*Sic.* Answer to us.

*Cor.* Say, then; 'tis true, I ought so.

*Sic.* We charge you, that you have contriv'd to take  
From Rome all season'd office and to wind  
Yourself into a power tyrannical; 65  
For which you are a traitor to the people.

*Cor.* How ! traitor !

*Men.* Nay, temperately ; your promise.

*Cor.* The fires i' the lowest hell fold in the people !  
 Call me their traitor ! Thou injurious tribune !  
 Within thine eyes sat twenty thousand deaths, 70  
 In thy hands clutch'd as many millions, in  
 Thy lying tongue both numbers, I would say  
 "Thou liest" unto thee with a voice as free  
 As I do pray the gods.

*Sic.* Mark you this, people ?

[*Citizens.*] To the rock, to the rock with him !

*Sic.* Peace !

We need not put new matter to his charge. 76  
 What you have seen him do and heard him speak,  
 Beating your officers, cursing yourselves,  
 Opposing laws with strokes and here defying  
 Those whose great power must try him ; even  
 this, 80  
 So criminal and in such capital kind,  
 Deserves the extremest death.

*Bru.* But since he hath  
 Serv'd well for Rome, —

*Cor.* What do you prate of service ?

*Bru.* I talk of that, that know it.

*Cor.* You ? 85

*Men.* Is this the promise that you made your mother ?

*Com.* Know, I pray you, —

*Cor.* I'll know no further.



Let them pronounce the steep Tarpeian death,  
 Vagabond exile, flaying, pent to linger  
 But with a grain a day, I would not buy 90  
 Their mercy at the price of one fair word ;  
 Nor check my courage for what they can give,  
 To have't with saying "Good morrow."

*Sic.* For that he has,  
 As much as in him lies, from time to time  
 Envi'd against the people, seeking means 95  
 To pluck away their power, as now at last  
 Given hostile strokes, and that not in the presence  
 Of dreaded justice, but on the ministers  
 That do distribute it ; in the name o' the people  
 And in the power of us the tribunes, we, 100  
 Even from this instant, banish him our city,  
 In peril of precipitation  
 From off the rock Tarpeian never more  
 To enter our Rome gates. I' the people's name,  
 I say it shall be so. 105

[*Citizens.*] It shall be so, it shall be so. Let him away !  
 He's banish'd, and it shall be so.

*Com.* Hear me, my masters, and my common  
 friends, —

*Sic.* He's sentenc'd ; no more hearing.

*Com.* Let me speak.  
 I have been consul, and can show for Rome 110  
 Her enemies' marks upon me. I do love  
 My country's good with a respect more tender,

More holy and profound, than mine own life,  
 My dear wife's estimate, her womb's increase  
 And treasure of my loins ; then if I would 115  
 Speak that, —

*Sic.* We know your drift ; speak what ?

*Bru.* There's no more to be said, but he is banish'd  
 As enemy to the people and his country.  
 It shall be so.

[*Citizens.*] It shall be so, it shall be so. †

*Cor.* You common cry of curs ! whose breath I hate 120  
 As reek o' the rotten fens, whose loves I prize  
 As the dead carcasses of unburied men  
 That do corrupt my air, I banish you !  
 And here remain with your uncertainty !  
 Let every feeble rumour shake your hearts ! 125  
 Your enemies, with nodding of their plumes,  
 Fan you into despair ! Have the power still  
 To banish your defenders ; till at length  
 Your ignorance, which finds not till it feels,  
 Making not reservation of yourselves, 130  
 Still your own foes, deliver you as most  
 Abated captives to some nation  
 That won you without blows ! Despising,  
 For you, the city, thus I turn my back ;  
 There is a world elsewhere. 135

*Exeunt Coriolanus, Cominius [Menenius, Senators, and Patricians]. They all shout, and throw up their caps.*

*Æd.* The people's enemy is gone, is gone!

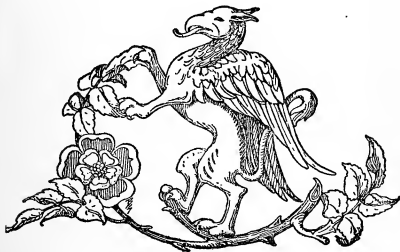
[*Citizens.*] Our enemy is banish'd! he is gone! Hoo!  
hoo!

*Sic.* Go, see him out at gates, and follow him,  
As he hath follow'd you, with all despite;  
Give him deserv'd vexation. Let a guard 140  
Attend us through the city.

[*Citizens.*] Come, come; let's see him out at gates;  
come.

The gods preserve our noble tribunes! Come.

*Exeunt.*



## ACT FOURTH

### SCENE I

[*Rome. Before a gate of the city.*]

*Enter Coriolanus, Volumnia, Virgilia, Menenius, Cominius, with the young Nobility of Rome.*

*Cor.* Come, leave your tears : a brief farewell. The  
beast

With many heads butts me away. Nay, mother,  
Where is your ancient courage? You were us'd  
To say extremity was the trier of spirits ;  
That common chances common men could bear ; 5  
That when the sea was calm all boats alike  
Show'd mastership in floating ; fortune's blows,  
When most struck home, being gentle, wounded,  
craves

A noble cunning. You were us'd to load me  
With precepts that would make invincible 10  
The heart that conn'd them.

*Vir.* O heavens ! O heavens !

*Cor.* Nay, I prithee, woman, —

*Vol.* Now the red pestilence strike all trades in Rome,  
And occupations perish !



More than a wild exposture to each chance  
That starts i' the way before thee.

*Cor.* O the gods !

*Com.* I'll follow thee a month, devise with thee  
Where thou shalt rest, that thou mayst hear of us  
And we of thee ; so if the time thrust forth 40  
A cause for thy repeal, we shall not send  
O'er the vast world to seek a single man,  
And lose advantage, which doth ever cool  
I' the absence of the needer.

*Cor.* Fare ye well !

Thou hast years upon thee, and thou art too full  
Of the wars' surfeits, to go rove with one 46  
That's yet unbruis'd. Bring me but out at gate.  
Come, my sweet wife, my dearest mother, and  
My friends of noble touch, when I am forth,  
Bid me farewell, and smile. I pray you, come, 50  
While I remain above the ground, you shall  
Hear from me still, and never of me aught  
But what is like me formerly.

*Men.* That's worthily

As any ear can hear. Come, let's not weep.  
If I could shake off but one seven years 55  
From these old arms and legs, by the good gods,  
I'd with thee every foot.

*Cor.* Give me thy hand :

Come.

*Exeunt.*



*Men.* Peace, peace ; be not so loud.

*Vol.* If that I could for weeping, you should hear, —  
Nay, and you shall hear some. [*To Brutus.*]  
Will you be gone ?

*Vir.* [*To Sicinius.*] You shall stay too. I would I  
had the power 15  
To say so to my husband.

*Sic.* Are you mankind ?

*Vol.* Ay, fool ; is that a shame ? Note but this fool.  
Was not a man my father ? Hadst thou foxship  
To banish him that struck more blows for Rome  
Than thou hast spoken words ?

*Sic.* O blessed heavens !

*Vol.* Moe noble blows than ever thou wise words, 21  
And for Rome's good. I'll tell thee what : —  
yet go.

Nay, but thou shalt stay too : — I would my son  
Were in Arabia and thy tribe before him,  
His good sword in his hand.

*Sic.* What then ?

*Vir.* What then !  
He'd make an end of thy posterity. 26

*Vol.* Bastards and all !  
Good man, the wounds that he does bear for Rome !

*Men.* Come, come, peace.

*Sic.* I would he had continued to his country 30  
As he began, and not unknit himself  
The noble knot he made.





[*To Virgilia.*] Leave this faint puling and lament as I do,  
 In anger, Juno-like. Come, come, come. *Exeunt.*  
*Men.* Fie, fie, fie! *Exit.*

## SCENE III

[*A highway between Rome and Antium.*]

*Enter a Roman and a Volsc* [*meeting*].

*Rom.* I know you well, sir, and you know me.  
 Your name, I think, is Adrian.

*Vols.* It is so, sir. Truly, I have forgot you.

*Rom.* I am a Roman; and my services are, as you  
 are, against 'em. Know you me yet? 5

*Vols.* Nicanor? No.

*Rom.* The same, sir.

*Vols.* You had more beard when I last saw you;  
 but your favour is well appear'd by your  
 tongue. What's the news in Rome? I have 10  
 a note from the Volscian state, to find you out  
 there. You have well saved me a day's jour-  
 ney.

*Rom.* There hath been in Rome strange insurrec-  
 tions; the people against the senators, patri-  
 cians, and nobles. 15

*Vols.* Hath been! Is it ended, then? Our state  
 thinks not so. They are in a most warlike  
 preparation, and hope to come upon them in  
 the heat of their division.

*Rom.* The main blaze of it is past, but a small 20  
thing would make it flame again; for the  
nobles receive so to heart the banishment of  
that worthy Coriolanus, that they are in a ripe  
aptness to take all power from the people and  
to pluck from them their tribunes for ever. 25  
This lies glowing, I can tell you, and is almost  
mature for the violent breaking out.

*Vols.* Coriolanus banish'd!

*Rom.* Banish'd, sir.

*Vols.* You will be welcome with this intelligence, 30  
Nicanor.

*Rom.* The day serves well for them now. I have  
heard it said, the fittest time to corrupt a  
man's wife is when she's fallen out with her  
husband. Your noble Tullus Aufidius will 35  
appear well in these wars, his great opposer,  
Coriolanus, being now in no request of his  
country.

*Vols.* He cannot choose. I am most fortunate  
thus accidentally to encounter you. You have 40  
ended my business, and I will merrily accom-  
pany you home.

*Rom.* I shall, between this and supper, tell you  
most strange things from Rome; all tend-  
ing to the good of their adversaries. Have you 45  
an army ready, say you?

*Vols.* A most royal one; the centurions and their

charges, distinctly billeted, already in the entertainment, and to be on foot at an hour's warning. 50

*Rom.* I am joyful to hear of their readiness, and am the man, I think, that shall set them in present action. So, sir, heartily well met, and most glad of your company.

*Vols.* You take my part from me, sir; I have the most cause to be glad of yours. 55

*Rom.* Well, let us go together. *Exeunt.*

#### SCENE IV

[*Antium. Before Aufidius's house.*]

*Enter Coriolanus, in mean apparel, disguis'd and muffled.*

*Cor.* A goodly city is this Antium. City,  
 'Tis I that made thy widows; many an heir  
 Of these fair edifices 'fore my wars  
 Have I heard groan and drop. Then know me  
 not,  
 Lest that thy wives with spits and boys with  
 stones 5  
 In puny battle slay me,

*Enter a Citizen.*

Save you, sir.

*Cit.* And you.

Cor. Direct me, if it be your will,  
Where great Aufidius lies. Is he in Antium?

Cit. He is, and feasts the nobles of the state 9  
At his house this night.

Cor. Which is his house, beseech you?

Cit. This, here before you.

Cor. Thank you, sir : farewell.

*Exit Citizen.*

O world, thy slippery turns! Friends now fast  
sworn,

Whose double bosoms seem to wear one heart,

Whose hours, whose bed, whose meal and exercise

Are still together, who twin, as 'twere, in love 15

Unseparable, shall within this hour,

On a dissension of a doit, break out

To bitterest enmity; so, fellest foes,

Whose passions and whose plots have broke their  
sleep

To take the one the other, by some chance, 20

Some trick not worth an egg, shall grow dear  
friends

And interjoin their issues. So with me;

My birthplace hate I, and my love's upon

This enemy town. I'll enter. If he slay me,

He does fair justice; if he give me way, 25

I'll do his country service. *Exit.*

## SCENE V

[*The same. A hall in Aufidius's house.*]

*Music within. Enter a Servingman.*

1. *Serv.* Wine, wine, wine! What service is here!  
I think our fellows are asleep. *Exit.*

*Enter a second Servingman.*

2. *Serv.* Where's Cotus? my master calls for him.  
Cotus! *Exit.*

*Enter Coriolanus.*

*Cor.* A goodly house! The feast smells well, but 5  
I appear not like a guest.

*Re-enter the first Servingman.*

1. *Serv.* What would you have, friend? Whence  
are you? Here's no place for you; pray,  
go to the door. *Exit.*

*Cor.* I have deserv'd no better entertainment, 10  
In being Coriolanus.

*Re-enter second Servingman.*

2. *Serv.* Whence are you, sir? Has the porter his  
eyes in his head, that he gives entrance to such  
companions? Pray, get you out.

*Cor.* Away! 15

2. *Serv.* Away ! get you away.

*Cor.* Now thou'rt troublesome.

2. *Serv.* Are you so brave ? I'll have you talk'd with anon.

*Enter a third Servingman. The first meets him.*

3. *Serv.* What fellow's this ? 20

1. *Serv.* A strange one as ever I look'd on ; I cannot get him out o' th' house. Prithee, call my master to him. [Retires.]

3. *Serv.* What have you to do here, fellow ? Pray you, avoid the house. 25

*Cor.* Let me but stand ; I will not hurt your hearth.

3. *Serv.* What are you ?

*Cor.* A gentleman.

3. *Serv.* A marvellous poor one. 30

*Cor.* True, so I am.

3. *Serv.* Pray you, poor gentleman, take up some other station ; here's no place for you. Pray you, avoid. Come.

*Cor.* Follow your function, go, and batten on cold bits. 35  
*Pushes him away from him.*

3. *Serv.* What, you will not ? Prithee, tell my master what a strange guest he has here.

2. *Serv.* And I shall. *Exit.*

3. *Serv.* Where dwell'st thou ? 40

*Cor.* Under the canopy.

3. *Serv.* Under the canopy ?

*Cor.* Ay.

3. *Serv.* Where's that ?

*Cor.* I' the city of kites and crows. 45

3. *Serv.* I' the city of kites and crows ! What an  
ass it is ! Then thou dwell'st with daws  
too ?

*Cor.* No, I serve not thy master.

3. *Serv.* How, sir ! do you meddle with my mas- 50  
ter ?

*Cor.* Ay ; 'tis an honest service than to meddle  
with thy mistress.

Thou prat'st, and prat'st ; serve with thy trencher,  
hence !

*Beats him away. [Exit third Servingman.]*

*Enter Aufidius with the [second] Servingman.*

*Auf.* Where is this fellow ? 55

2. *Serv.* Here, sir. I'd have beaten him like a dog,  
but for disturbing the lords within. [*Retires.*]

*Auf.* Whence com'st thou ? What wouldst thou ?  
Thy name ?

Why speak'st not ? Speak, man : what's thy  
name ?

*Cor.* If, Tullus [*unmuffling*], not yet thou know'st 60  
me, and, seeing me, dost not think me for the  
man I am, necessity commands me name my-  
self.



*Auf.* What is thy name ?

*Cor.* A name unmusical to the Volscians' ears,  
And harsh in sound to thine.

*Auf.* Say, what's thy name ?

Thou hast a grim appearance, and thy face    66

Bears a command in't; though thy tackle's torn,

Thou show'st a noble vessel. What's thy name ?

*Cor.* Prepare thy brow to frown. Know'st thou me  
yet ?

*Auf.* I know thee not. Thy name ?    70

*Cor.* My name is Caius Marcius, who hath done

To thee particularly and to all the Volsces

Great hurt and mischief; thereto witness may

My surname, Coriolanus. The painful service,

The extreme dangers, and the drops of blood    75

Shed for my thankless country are requited

But with that surname; a good memory,

And witness of the malice and displeasure

Which thou shouldst bear me. Only that name  
remains.

The cruelty and envy of the people,    80

Permitted by our dastard nobles, who

Have all forsook me, hath devour'd the rest;

And suffer'd me by the voice of slaves to be

Whoop'd out of Rome. Now this extremity

Hath brought me to thy hearth; not out of  
hope —    85

Mistake me not — to save my life, for if

I had fear'd death, of all the men i' the world  
 I would have 'voided thee, but in mere spite,  
 To be full quit of those my banishers,  
 Stand I before thee here. Then if thou hast 90  
 A heart of wreak in thee, that wilt revenge  
 Thine own particular wrongs and stop those  
     maims  
 Of shame seen through thy country, speed thee  
     straight,  
 And make my misery serve thy turn. So use it  
 That my revengeful services may prove 95  
 As benefits to thee, for I will fight  
 Against my cank'red country with the spleen  
 Of all the under fiends. But if so be  
 Thou dar'st not this, and that to prove more  
     fortunes  
 Thou'rt tired, then, in a word, I also am 100  
 Longer to live most weary, and present  
 My throat to thee and to thy ancient malice ;  
 Which not to cut would show thee but a fool,  
 Since I have ever followed thee with hate,  
 Drawn tuns of blood out of thy country's breast, 105  
 And cannot live but to thy shame, unless  
 It be to do thee service.

*Auf.*

O Marcius, Marcius !

Each word thou hast spoke hath weeded from my  
     heart

A root of ancient envy. If Jupiter

Should from yond cloud speak divine things, 110  
And say "'Tis true," I'd not believe them more  
Than thee, all noble Marcius. Let me twine  
Mine arms about that body, whereagainst  
My grained ash an hundred times hath broke,  
And scarr'd the moon with splinters. Here I clip 115  
The anvil of my sword, and do contest  
As hotly and as nobly with thy love  
As ever in ambitious strength I did  
Contend against thy valour. Know thou first,  
I lov'd the maid I married; never man 120  
Sigh'd truer breath; but that I see thee here,  
Thou noble thing! more dances my rapt heart  
Than when I first my wedded mistress saw  
Bestride my threshold. Why, thou Mars! I  
tell thee,  
We have a power on foot; and I had purpose 125  
Once more to hew thy target from thy brawn,  
Or lose mine arm for't. Thou hast beat me out  
Twelve several times, and I have nightly since  
Dreamt of encounters 'twixt thyself and me;  
We have been down together in my sleep, 130  
Unbuckling helms, fisting each other's throat,  
And wak'd half dead with nothing. Worthy  
Marcius,  
Had we no quarrel else to Rome, but that  
Thou art thence banish'd, we would muster all  
From twelve to seventy, and pouring war 135

Into the bowels of ungrateful Rome,  
 Like a bold flood o'er-beat. O, come, go in,  
 And take our friendly senators by the hands ;  
 Who now are here, taking their leaves of me,  
 Who am prepar'd against your territories, 140  
 Though not for Rome itself.

*Cor.* You bless me, gods !

*Auf.* Therefore, most absolute sir, if thou wilt have  
 The leading of thine own revenges, take  
 The one half of my commission ; and set down —  
 As best thou art experienc'd, since thou know'st  
 Thy country's strength and weakness, — thine  
 own ways ; 146  
 Whether to knock against the gates of Rome,  
 Or rudely visit them in parts remote,  
 To fright them, ere destroy. But come in ;  
 Let me commend thee first to those that shall 150  
 Say yea to thy desires. A thousand welcomes !  
 And more a friend than e'er an enemy ;  
 Yet, Marcius, that was much. Your hand ; most  
 welcome !

*Exeunt Coriolanus and Aufidius. The two  
 Servingmen [come forward].*

1. *Serv.* Here's a strange alteration !

2. *Serv.* By my hand, I had thought to have 155  
 stricken him with a cudgel ; and yet my mind  
 gave me his clothes made a false report  
 of him.

1. *Serv.* What an arm he has! He turn'd me about with his finger and his thumb, as one would set up a top. 160

2. *Serv.* Nay, I knew by his face that there was something in him. He had, sir, a kind of face, methought, — I cannot tell how to term it.

1. *Serv.* He had so; looking as it were — would I were hang'd, but I thought there was more in him than I could think. 165

2. *Serv.* So did I, I'll be sworn. He is simply the rarest man i' the world.

1. *Serv.* I think he is; but a greater soldier than he you wot one. 170

2. *Serv.* Who? My master?

1. *Serv.* Nay, it's no matter for that.

2. *Serv.* Worth six on him.

1. *Serv.* Nay, not so neither; but I take him to be the greater soldier. 175

2. *Serv.* Faith, look you, one cannot tell how to say that. For the defence of a town, our general is excellent.

1. *Serv.* Ay, and for an assault too. 180

*Re-enter third Servingman.*

3. *Serv.* O slaves, I can tell you news, — news, you rascals!

1. and 2. *Serv.* What, what, what? Let's partake.

3. *Serv.* I would not be a Roman, of all nations ; 185  
I had as lieve be a condemn'd man.

1. and 2. *Serv.* Wherefore ? wherefore ?

3. *Serv.* Why, here's he that was wont to thwack  
our general, Caius Marcius.

1. *Serv.* Why do you say, "thwack our general" ? 190

3. *Serv.* I do not say, "thwack our gen-  
eral" ; but he was always good enough for  
him.

2. *Serv.* Come, we are fellows and friends ; he was  
ever too hard for him ; I have heard him say 195  
so himself.

1. *Serv.* He was too hard for him directly, to say  
the troth on't. Before Corioli he scotch'd  
him and notch'd him like a carbonado.

2. *Serv.* An he had been cannibally given, he 200  
might have boil'd and eaten him too.

1. *Serv.* But more of thy news.

3. *Serv.* Why, he is so made on here within, as if he  
were son and heir to Mars ; set at upper end  
o' the table ; no question ask'd him by any 205  
of the senators, but they stand bald before him.  
Our general himself makes a mistress of him ;  
sanctifies himself with 's hand and turns up  
the white o' the eye to his discourse. But  
the bottom of the news is, our general is cut i' 210  
the middle and but one half of what he was  
yesterday ; for the other has half, by the en-

treaty and grant of the whole table. He'll go, he says, and sowl the porter of Rome gates by the ears. He will mow all down before him, 215 and leave his passage poll'd.

2. *Serv.* And he's as like to do't as any man I can imagine.

3. *Serv.* Do't! he will do't; for, look you, sir, he has as many friends as enemies; which friends, 220 sir, as it were, durst not, look you, sir, show themselves, as we term it, his friends whilst he's in directitude.

1. *Serv.* Directitude! What's that?

3. *Serv.* But when they shall see, sir, his crest up 225 again, and the man in blood, they will out of their burrows, like conies after rain, and revel all with him.

1. *Serv.* But when goes this forward?

3. *Serv.* To-morrow; to-day; presently; you 230 shall have the drum struck up this afternoon. 'Tis, as it were, a parcel of their feast, and to be executed ere they wipe their lips.

2. *Serv.* Why, then we shall have a stirring world again. This peace is nothing, but to rust iron, 235 increase tailors, and breed ballad-makers.

1. *Serv.* Let me have war, say I; it exceeds peace as far as day does night; it's spritely, waking, audible, and full of vent. Peace is a very apoplexy, lethargy; mull'd, deaf, sleepy, insen- 240

sible ; a getter of more bastard children than war's a destroyer of men.

2. *Serv.* 'Tis so ; and as wars, in some sort, may be said to be a ravisher, so it cannot be denied but peace is a great maker of cuckolds. 245

1. *Serv.* Ay, and it makes men hate one another.

3. *Serv.* Reason ; because they then less need one another. The wars for my money ! I hope to see Romans as cheap as Volscians. — They are rising, they are rising. 250

1. and 2. *Serv.* In, in, in, in ! *Exeunt.*

### SCENE VI

[*Rome. A public place.*]

*Enter Sicinius and Brutus.*

*Sic.* We hear not of him, neither need we fear him ; His remedies are tame. The present peace And quietness of the people, which before Were in wild hurry, here do make his friends Blush that the world goes well, who rather had, 5 Though they themselves did suffer by't, behold Dissentious numbers pest'ring streets than see Our tradesmen singing in their shops and going About their functions friendly.

*Enter Menenius.*

*Bru.* We stood to't in good time. Is this Menenius ? 10



*Sic.* 'Tis he, 'tis he. O, he is grown most kind of late.  
Hail, sir!

*Men.* Hail to you both!

*Sic.* Your Coriolanus  
Is not much miss'd, but with his friends.  
The commonwealth doth stand, and so would do,  
Were he more angry at it. 15

*Men.* All's well; and might have been much better, if  
He could have temporiz'd.

*Sic.* Where is he, hear you?

*Men.* Nay, I hear nothing; his mother and his wife  
Hear nothing from him.

*Enter three or four Citizens.*

[*Citizens.*] The gods preserve you both!

*Sic.* God-den, our neighbours. 20

*Bru.* God-den to you all, god-den to you all.

*1. Cit.* Ourselves, our wives, and children, on our  
knees,

Are bound to pray for you both.

*Sic.* Live, and thrive!

*Bru.* Farewell, kind neighbours! We wish'd Corio-  
lanus 24

Had lov'd you as we did.

[*Citizens.*] Now the gods keep you!

*Both Tri.* Farewell, farewell. *Exeunt Citizens.*

*Sic.* This is a happier and more comely time

Than when these fellows ran about the streets,  
Crying confusion.

*Bru.* Caius Marcius was  
A worthy officer i' the war ; but insolent, 30  
O'ercome with pride, ambitious past all thinking,  
Self-loving, —

*Sic.* And affecting one sole throne,  
Without assistance.

*Men.* I think not so.

*Sic.* We should by this, to all our lamentation,  
If he had gone forth consul, found it so. 35

*Bru.* The gods have well prevented it, and Rome  
Sits safe and still without him.

*Enter an Ædile.*

*Æd.* Worthy tribunes,  
There is a slave, whom we have put in prison,  
Reports the Volsces with two several powers  
Are ent' red in the Roman territories, 40  
And with the deepest malice of the war  
Destroy what lies before 'em.

*Men.* 'Tis Aufidius,  
Who, hearing of our Marcius' banishment,  
Thrusts forth his horns again into the world ;  
Which were inshell'd when Marcius stood for  
Rome, 45  
And durst not once peep out.

*Sic.* Come, what talk you  
Of Marcius ?

*Bru.* Go see this rumourer whipp'd. It cannot be  
The Volsces dare break with us.

*Men.* Cannot be !

We have record that very well it can ;  
And three examples of the like hath been 50  
Within my age. But reason with the fellow,  
Before you punish him, where he heard this,  
Lest you shall chance to whip your information  
And beat the messenger who bids beware  
Of what is to be dreaded.

*Sic.* Tell not me ! 55

I know this cannot be.

*Bru.* Not possible.

*Enter a Messenger.*

*Mess.* The nobles in great earnestness are going  
All to the Senate-house ; some news is come  
That turns their countenances.

*Sic.* 'Tis this slave, —  
Go whip him 'fore the people's eyes, — his rais-  
ing ; 60  
Nothing but his report.

*Mess.* Yes, worthy sir,  
The slave's report is seconded ; and more,  
More fearful, is deliver'd.

*Sic.* What more fearful ?

*Mess.* It is spoke freely out of many mouths —

How probable I do not know — that Marcius, 65  
Join'd with Aufidius, leads a power 'gainst Rome,  
And vows revenge as spacious as between  
The young'st and oldest thing.

*Sic.* This is most likely !

*Bru.* Rais'd only, that the weaker sort may wish  
Good Marcius home again.

*Sic.* The very trick on't.

*Men.* This is unlikely. 71

He and Aufidius can no more atone  
Than violentest contrariety.

*Enter [a second] Messenger.*

[2.] *Mess.* You are sent for to the Senate.

A fearful army, led by Caius Marcius 75

Associated with Aufidius, rages

Upon our territories ; and have already

O'erborne their way, consum'd with fire, and  
took

What lay before them.

*Enter Cominius.*

*Com.* O, you have made good work !

*Men.* What news ? what news ?

*Com.* You have help to ravish your own daughters  
and 81

To melt the city leads upon your pates,  
To see your wives dishonour'd to your noses, —

*Men.* What's the news? what's the news?

*Com.* Your temples burned in their cement, and 85  
Your franchises, whereon you stood, confin'd  
Into an auger's bore.

*Men.* Pray now, your news? —  
You have made fair work, I fear me. — Pray, your  
news?

If Marcius should be join'd with Volscians, —

*Com.* If!

He is their god. He leads them like a thing 90  
Made by some other deity than nature,  
That shapes man better; and they follow him,  
Against us brats, with no less confidence  
Than boys pursuing summer butterflies,  
Or butchers killing flies.

*Men.* You have made good work,  
You and your apron-men; you that stood so  
much 96

Upon the voice of occupation and  
The breath of garlic-eaters!

*Com.* He will shake  
Your Rome about your ears.

*Men.* As Hercules  
Did shake down mellow fruit. You have made  
fair work! 100

*Bru.* But is this true, sir?

*Com.* Ay; and you'll look pale  
 Before you find it other. All the regions  
 Do smilingly revolt; and who resists  
 Are mock'd for valiant ignorance,  
 And perish constant fools. Who is't can blame  
 him? 105

Your enemies and his find something in him.

*Men.* We are all undone, unless  
 The noble man have mercy.

*Com.* Who shall ask it?  
 The tribunes cannot do't for shame; the people  
 Deserve such pity of him as the wolf 110  
 Does of the shepherds. For his best friends, if  
 they  
 Should say, "Be good to Rome," they charg'd  
 him even  
 As those should do that had deserv'd his hate,  
 And therein show'd like enemies.

*Men.* 'Tis true.  
 If he were putting to my house the brand 115  
 That should consume it, I have not the face  
 To say, "Beseech you, cease." You have made  
 fair hands,  
 You and your crafts! You have crafted fair!

*Com.* You have brought  
 A trembling upon Rome, such as was never  
 So incapable of help.

[*Both*] *Tri.* Say not we brought it. 120

*Men.* How! Was't we? We lov'd him; but, like  
beasts

And cowardly nobles, gave way unto your clusters,  
Who did hoot him out o' the city.

*Com.* But I fear  
They'll roar him in again. Tullus Aufidius,  
The second name of men, obeys his points 125  
As if he were his officer. Desperation  
Is all the policy, strength, and defence,  
That Rome can make against them.

*Enter a troop of Citizens.*

*Men.* Here come the clusters.  
And is Aufidius with him? You are they  
That made the air unwholesome, when you cast 130  
Your stinking greasy caps in hooting at  
Coriolanus' exile. Now he's coming;  
And not a hair upon a soldier's head  
Which will not prove a whip. As many cox-  
combs  
As you threw caps up will he tumble down, 135  
And pay you for your voices. 'Tis no matter;  
If he could burn us all into one coal,  
We have deserv'd it.

[*Citizens.*] Faith, we hear fearful news.

1. *Cit.* For mine own part,  
When I said, banish him, I said, 'twas pity. 140

2. *Cit.* And so did I.

3. *Cit.* And so did I; and, to say the truth, so did very many of us. That we did, we did for the best; and though we willingly consented to his banishment, yet it was against our 145 will.

*Com.* You're goodly things, you voices!

*Men.* You have made  
Good work, you and your cry! Shall's to the Capitol?

*Com.* O, ay, what else?

*Exeunt Cominius and Menenius.*

*Sic.* Go, masters, get you home; be not dismay'd. 150  
These are a side that would be glad to have  
This true which they so seem to fear. Go home,  
And show no sign of fear.

1. *Cit.* The gods be good to us! Come, masters, let's home. I ever said we were i' the 155  
wrong when we banish'd him.

2. *Cit.* So did we all. But, come, let's home.

*Exeunt Citizens.*

*Bru.* I do not like this news.

*Sic.* Nor I.

*Bru.* Let's to the Capitol. Would half my wealth 160  
Would buy this for a lie!

*Sic.* Pray, let's go.

*Exeunt.*



## SCENE VII

[A camp, at a small distance from Rome.]

*Enter Aufidius with his Lieutenant.*

*Auf.* Do they still fly to the Roman?

*Lieu.* I do not know what witchcraft's in him, but  
Your soldiers use him as the grace 'fore meat,  
Their talk at table, and their thanks at end ;  
And you are dark'ned in this action, sir, 5  
Even by your own.

*Auf.* I cannot help it now,  
Unless, by using means, I lame the foot  
Of our design. He bears himself more proudlier,  
Even to my person, than I thought he would  
When first I did embrace him ; yet his nature 10  
In that's no changeling ; and I must excuse  
What cannot be amended.

*Lieu.* Yet I wish, sir, —  
I mean for your particular, — you had not  
Join'd in commission with him ; but either  
Have borne the action of yourself, or else 15  
To him had left it solely.

*Auf.* I understand thee well ; and be thou sure,  
When he shall come to his account, he knows not  
What I can urge against him. Although it seems,  
And so he thinks, and is no less apparent 20  
To the vulgar eye, that he bears all things fairly,

And shows good husbandry for the Volscian state,  
 Fights dragon-like, and does achieve as soon  
 As draw his sword ; yet he hath left undone  
 That which shall break his neck or hazard mine, 25  
 Whene'er we come to our account.

*Lieu.* Sir, I beseech you, think you he'll carry Rome ?

*Auf.* All places yield to him ere he sits down,  
 And the nobility of Rome are his.  
 The senators and patricians love him too ; 30  
 The tribunes are no soldiers, and their people  
 Will be as rash in the repeal as hasty  
 To expel him thence. I think he'll be to Rome  
 As is the osprey to the fish, who takes it  
 By sovereignty of nature. First he was 35  
 A noble servant to them, but he could not  
 Carry his honours even. Whether 'twas pride,  
 Which out of daily fortune ever taints  
 The happy man ; whether defect of judgement,  
 To fail in the disposing of those chances 40  
 Which he was lord of ; or whether nature,  
 Not to be other than one thing, not moving  
 From the casque to the cushion, but commanding  
 peace

Even with the same austerity and garb  
 As he controll'd the war ; but one of these, — 45  
 As he hath spices of them all — not all, —  
 For I dare so far free him, — made him fear'd ;  
 So, hated ; and so, banish'd : but he has a merit

To choke it in the utterance. So our virtues  
Lie in the interpretation of the time ; 50  
And power, unto itself most commendable,  
Hath not a tomb so evident as a chair  
To extol what it hath done.  
One fire drives out one fire ; one nail, one nail ;  
Rights by rights falter, strengths by strengths do  
fail. 55  
Come, let's away. When, Caius, Rome is thine,  
Thou art poor'st of all ; then shortly art thou  
mine. *Exeunt.*



## ACT FIFTH

### SCENE I

[*Rome. A public place.*]

*Enter Menenius, Cominius, Sicinius, Brutus, with others.*

*Men.* No, I'll not go. You hear what he hath said  
Which was sometime his general ; who lov'd him  
In a most dear particular. He call'd me father ;  
But what o' that ? Go, you that banish'd him ;  
A mile before his tent fall down, and knee 5  
The way into his mercy. Nay, if he coy'd  
To hear Cominius speak, I'll keep at home.

*Com.* He would not seem to know me.

*Men.* Do you hear ?

*Com.* Yet one time he did call me by my name.  
I urg'd our old acquaintance, and the drops 10  
That we have bled together. Coriolanus  
He would not answer to ; forbade all names ;  
He was a kind of nothing, titleless,  
Till he had forg'd himself a name o' the fire  
Of burning Rome.

*Men.* Why, so ; you have made good work ! 15

A pair of tribunes that have wreck'd fair Rome  
To make coals cheap ! A noble memory !

*Com.* I minded him how royal 'twas to pardon  
When it was less expected ; he replied,  
It was a bare petition of a state      20  
To one whom they had punish'd.

*Men.*      Very well ;  
Could he say less ?

*Com.* I offered to awaken his regard  
For 's private friends ; his answer to me was,  
He could not stay to pick them in a pile      25  
Of noisome musty chaff. He said 'twas folly,  
For one poor grain or two, to leave unburnt  
And still to nose the offence.

*Men.*      For one poor grain or two !  
I am one of those ; his mother, wife, his child,  
And this brave fellow too, we are the grains.      30  
You are the musty chaff, and you are smelt  
Above the moon ; we must be burnt for you.

*Sic.* Nay, pray, be patient. If you refuse your aid  
In this so never-needed help, yet do not  
Upbraid 's with our distress. But, sure, if you      35  
Would be your country's pleader, your good  
tongue,  
More than the instant army we can make,  
Might stop our countryman.

*Men.*      No, I'll not meddle.

*Sic.* Pray you, go to him.

*Men.* What should I do ?

*Bru.* Only make trial what your love can do 40

For Rome, towards Marcius.

*Men.* Well, and say that Marcius

Return me, as Cominius is return'd,

Unheard ; what then ?

But as a discontented friend, grief-shot

With his unkindness ? Say't be so ?

*Sic.* Yet your good will

Must have that thanks from Rome, after the  
measure 46

As you intended well.

*Men.* I'll undertake't.

I think he'll hear me. Yet, to bite his lip

And hum at good Cominius, much unhearts me.

He was not taken well ; he had not din'd. 50

The veins unfill'd, our blood is cold, and then

We pout upon the morning, are unapt

To give or to forgive ; but when we have stuff'd

These pipes and these conveyances of our blood

With wine and feeding, we have suppler souls 55

Than in our priest-like fasts : therefore I'll watch  
him

Till he be dieted to my request,

And then I'll set upon him,

*Bru.* You know the very road into his kindness,

And cannot lose your way.

*Men.* Good faith, I'll prove him,

Speed how it will. I shall ere long have know-  
ledge 61

Of my success. *Exit.*

*Com.* He'll never hear him.

*Sic.* Not?

*Com.* I tell you, he does sit in gold, his eye  
Red as 'twould burn Rome; and his injury  
The gaoler to his pity. I kneel'd before him; 65  
'Twas very faintly he said, "Rise"; dismiss'd me  
Thus, with his speechless hand. What he would do,  
He sent in writing after me, what he would not,  
Bound with an oath to yield to his conditions;  
So that all hope is vain, 70

Unless his noble mother and his wife, —

Who, as I hear, mean to solicit him

For mercy to his country. Therefore, let's hence,  
And with our fair entreaties haste them on.

*Exeunt.*

## SCENE II

[*Entrance of the Volscian camp before Rome.*] *The  
Watch on guard.*

*Enter to them, Menenius.*

*1. Watch.* Stay! Whence are you?

*2. Watch.* Stand, and go back.

*Men.* You guard like men; 'tis well; but, by your  
leave,

I am an officer of state, and come  
To speak with Coriolanus.

1. *Watch.* From whence?

*Men.* From Rome.

1. *Watch.* You may not pass, you must return; our  
general 5

Will no more hear from thence.

2. *Watch.* You'll see your Rome embrac'd with fire  
before

You'll speak with Coriolanus.

*Men.* Good my friends,

If you have heard your general talk of Rome

And of his friends there, it is lots to blanks, 10

My name hath touch'd your ears; it is Menenius.

1. *Watch.* Be it so; go back. The virtue of your name  
Is not here passable.

*Men.* I tell thee, fellow,

Thy general is my lover. I have been

The book of his good acts, whence men have read 15

His fame unparallel'd haply amplified;

For I have ever magnified my friends,

Of whom he's chief, with all the size that verity

Would without lapsing suffer; nay, sometimes,

Like to a bowl upon a subtle ground, 20

I have tumbled past the throw; and in his praise

Have almost stamp'd the leasing. Therefore,

fellow,

I must have leave to pass.



1. *Watch.* Faith, sir, if you had told as many lies  
 in his behalf as you have uttered words in    25  
 your own, you should not pass here; no,  
 though it were as virtuous to lie as to live  
 chastely. Therefore, go back.

*Men.* Prithee, fellow, remember my name is Me-  
 nenius, always factionary on the party of your    30  
 general.

2. *Watch.* Howsoever you have been his liar, as you  
 say you have, I am one that, telling true under  
 him, must say you cannot pass. Therefore,  
 go back.    35

*Men.* Has he din'd, canst thou tell? for I would  
 not speak with him till after dinner.

1. *Watch.* You are a Roman, are you?

*Men.* I am, as thy general is.

1. *Watch.* Then you should hate Rome, as he does.    40  
 Can you, when you have push'd out your  
 gates the very defender of them, and, in a vio-  
 lent popular ignorance, given your enemy your  
 shield, think to front his revenges with the  
 easy groans of old women, the virginal palms    45  
 of your daughters, or with the palsied inter-  
 cession of such a decay'd dotant as you seem  
 to be? Can you think to blow out the in-  
 tended fire your city is ready to flame in, with  
 such weak breath as this? No, you are de-    50  
 ceiv'd; therefore, back to Rome, and prepare

for your execution. You are condemn'd, our general has sworn you out of reprieve and pardon.

*Men.* Sirrah, if thy captain knew I were here, he would use me with estimation. 55

*1. Watch.* Come, my captain knows you not.

*Men.* I mean, thy general.

*1. Watch.* My general cares not for you. Back, I say, go; lest I let forth your half-pint of blood. Back, that's the utmost of your having; back! 60

*Men.* Nay, but, fellow, fellow, —

*Enter Coriolanus with Aufidius.*

*Cor.* What's the matter?

*Men.* Now, you companion, I'll say an errand for you. You shall know now that I am in estimation; you shall perceive that a Jack guardant cannot office me from my son Coriolanus. Guess but by my entertainment with him if thou stand'st not i' the state of hanging, or of some death more long in spectatorship, and crueller in suffering; behold now presently, and swoon for what's to come upon thee. [*To Cor.*] The glorious gods sit in hourly synod about thy particular prosperity, and love thee no worse than thy old father Menenius does! 70 75

O my son, my son ! thou art preparing fire for us ; look thee, here's water to quench it. I was hardly moved to come to thee ; but being assured none but myself could move thee, I have been blown out of our gates with sighs ; 80  
and conjure thee to pardon Rome, and thy petitionary countrymen. The good gods assuage thy wrath, and turn the dregs of it upon this varlet here, — this, who, like a block, hath denied my access to thee. 85

*Cor.* Away !

*Men.* How ! away !

*Cor.* Wife, mother, child, I know not. My affairs  
Are servanted to others ; though I owe  
My revenge properly, my remission lies 90  
In Volscian breasts. That we have been familiar,

Ingrate forgetfulness shall poison rather  
Than pity note how much. Therefore, begone.  
Mine ears against your suits are stronger than  
Your gates against my force. Yet, for I loved  
thee, 95

Take this along. I writ it for thy sake,

[*Gives a letter.*]

And would have sent it. Another word, Menenius,

I will not hear thee speak. This man, Aufidius,  
Was my belov'd in Rome ; yet thou behold'st !

*Auf.* You keep a constant temper. 100

*Exeunt [Coriolanus and Aufidius].*

1. *Watch.* Now, sir, is your name Menenius?

2. *Watch.* 'Tis a spell, you see, of much power.

You know the way home again.

1. *Watch.* Do you hear how we are shent for keeping your greatness back? 105

2. *Watch.* What cause do you think I have to swoon?

*Men.* I neither care for the world nor your general; for such things as you I can scarce think there's any, you're so slight. He that hath a will to die by himself fears it not from 110 another. Let your general do his worst. For you, be that you are, long; and your misery increase with your age! I say to you, as I was said to, Away! *Exit.*

1. *Watch.* A noble fellow, I warrant him. 115

2. *Watch.* The worthy fellow is our general.

He's the rock, the oak not to be wind-shaken.

*Exeunt.*

### SCENE III

*[The tent of Coriolanus.]*

*Enter Coriolanus, Aufidius [and others].*

*Cor.* We will before the walls of Rome to-morrow  
Set down our host. My partner in this action,

You must report to the Volscian lords, how plainly  
I have borne this business.

*Auf.* Only their ends  
You have respected ; stopp'd your ears against 5  
The general suit of Rome ; never admitted  
A private whisper, no, not with such friends  
That thought them sure of you.

*Cor.* This last old man,  
Whom with a crack'd heart I have sent to Rome,  
Lov'd me above the measure of a father ; 10  
Nay, godded me, indeed. Their latest refuge  
Was to send him ; for whose old love I have,  
Though I show'd sourly to him, once more offer'd  
The first conditions, which they did refuse  
And cannot now accept. To grace him only 15  
That thought he could do more, a very little  
I have yielded to. Fresh embassies and suits,  
Nor from the state nor private friends, hereafter  
Will I lend ear to. Ha ! what shout is this ?

*Shout within.*

Shall I be tempted to infringe my vow 20  
In the same time 'tis made ? I will not.

*Enter [in mourning habits] Virgilia, Volumnia [leading]  
young Marcius, Valeria, with Attendants.*

My wife comes foremost ; then the honour'd  
mould  
Wherein this trunk was fram'd, and in her hand

The grandchild to her blood. But out, affection!  
All bond and privilege of nature, break! 25

Let it be virtuous to be obstinate.

What is that curtsy worth? or those doves' eyes,  
Which can make gods forsworn? I melt, and  
am not

Of stronger earth than others. My mother bows,  
As if Olympus to a molehill should 30

In supplication nod; and my young boy

Hath an aspect of intercession which

Great nature cries, "Deny not." Let the Volsces  
Plough Rome and harrow Italy, I'll never

Be such a gosling to obey instinct, but stand 35

As if a man were author of himself

And knew no other kin.

*Vir.* My lord and husband!

*Cor.* These eyes are not the same I wore in Rome.

*Vir.* The sorrow that delivers us thus chang'd  
Makes you think so.

*Cor.* Like a dull actor now 40

I have forgot my part, and I am out,

Even to a full disgrace. Best of my flesh,

Forgive my tyranny; but do not say

For that, "Forgive our Romans." O, a kiss

Long as my exile, sweet as my revenge! 45

Now, by the jealous queen of heaven, that kiss

I carried from thee, dear; and my true lip

Hath virgin'd it e'er since. You gods! I prate,

And the most noble mother of the world  
 Leave unsaluted. Sink, my knee, i' the earth ; 50

*Kneels.*

Of thy deep duty more impression show  
 Than that of common sons.

*Vol.* O, stand up bless'd !

Whilst, with no softer cushion than the flint,  
 I kneel before thee ; and unproperly  
 Show duty, as mistaken all this while 55  
 Between the child and parent. [*Kneels.*]

*Cor.* [*Instantly raising her.*] What's this ?

Your knees to me ? to your corrected son ?  
 Then let the pebbles on the hungry beach  
 Fillip the stars ; then let the mutinous winds  
 Strike the proud cedars 'gainst the fiery sun, 60  
 Murd'ring impossibility, to make  
 What cannot be, slight work.

*Vol.* Thou art my warrior ;  
 I help to frame thee. Do you know this lady ?

*Cor.* The noble sister of Publicola,  
 The moon of Rome, chaste as the icicle 65  
 That's curded by the frost from purest snow  
 And hangs on Dian's temple. Dear Valeria !

*Vol.* This is a poor epitome of yours,  
 Which by the interpretation of full time  
 May show like all yourself.

*Cor.* The god of soldiers,  
 With the consent of supreme Jove, inform 71

Thy thoughts with nobleness ; that thou mayst  
prove

To shame invulnerable, and stick i' the wars  
Like a great sea-mark, standing every flaw,  
And saving those that eye thee !

*Vol.* Your knee, sirrah. 76

*Cor.* That's my brave boy !

*Vol.* Even he, your wife, this lady, and myself,  
Are suitors to you.

*Cor.* I beseech you, peace ;

Or, if you'd ask, remember this before :  
The thing I have forsworn to grant may never 80  
Be held by you denials. Do not bid me  
Dismiss my soldiers, or capitulate  
Again with Rome's mechanics ; tell me not  
Wherein I seem unnatural ; desire not  
To allay my rages and revenges with 85  
Your colder reasons.

*Vol.* O, no more, no more !

You have said you will not grant us anything ;  
For we have nothing else to ask, but that  
Which you deny already. Yet we will ask,  
That, if you fail in our request, the blame 90  
May hang upon your hardness ; therefore hear us.

*Cor.* Aufidius, and you Volsces, mark ; for we'll  
Hear nought from Rome in private. Your re-  
quest ?

*Vol.* Should we be silent and not speak, our raiment



And state of bodies would bewray what life 95  
We have led since thy exile. Think with thyself  
How more unfortunate than all living women  
Are we come hither; since that thy sight, which  
should

Make our eyes flow with joy, hearts dance with  
comforts,

Constrains them weep and shake with fear and  
sorrow; 100

Making the mother, wife, and child to see  
The son, the husband, and the father tearing  
His country's bowels out. And to poor we  
Thine enmity's most capital. Thou barr'st us  
Our prayers to the gods, which is a comfort 105

That all but we enjoy; for how can we,  
Alas, how can we for our country pray,  
Whereto we are bound, together with thy victory,  
Whereto we are bound? Alack, or we must lose  
The country, our dear nurse, or else thy person, 110  
Our comfort in the country. We must find

An evident calamity, though we had  
Our wish, which side should win; for either thou  
Must, as a foreign recreant, be led  
With manacles through our streets, or else 115  
Triumphantly tread on thy country's ruin,  
And bear the palm for having bravely shed  
Thy wife and children's blood. For myself, son,  
I purpose not to wait on fortune till

These wars determine. If I cannot persuade  
thee 120

Rather to show a noble grace to both parts  
Than seek the end of one, thou shalt no sooner  
March to assault thy country than to tread —  
Trust to't, thou shalt not — on thy mother's  
womb,  
That brought thee to this world.

*Vir.* Ay, and on mine,  
That brought you forth this boy, to keep your  
name 126

Living to time.

*Young Mar.* 'A shall not tread on me.  
I'll run away till I am bigger, but then I'll fight.

*Cor.* Not of a woman's tenderness to be,  
Requires nor child nor woman's face to see. 130  
I have sat too long. [*Rising.*]

*Vol.* Nay, go not from us thus.  
If it were so that our request did tend  
To save the Romans, thereby to destroy  
The Volsces whom you serve, you might con-  
demn us,  
As poisonous of your honour. No; our suit 135  
Is, that you reconcile them: while the Volsces  
May say, "This mercy we have show'd"; the  
Romans,  
"This we receiv'd"; and each in either side  
Give the all-hail to thee, and cry, "Be blest

For making up this peace!" Thou know'st,  
great son, 140

The end of war's uncertain, but this certain,  
That, if thou conquer Rome, the benefit  
Which thou shalt thereby reap is such a name  
Whose repetition will be dogg'd with curses ;  
Whose chronicle thus writ: "The man was  
noble, 145

But with his last attempt he wip'd it out ;  
Destroy'd his country ; and his name remains  
To the ensuing age abhorr'd." Speak to me,  
son.

Thou hast affected the fine strains of honour,  
To imitate the graces of the gods ; 150  
To tear with thunder the wide cheeks o' the air,  
And yet to charge thy sulphur with a bolt  
That should but rive an oak. Why dost not  
speak ?

Think'st thou it honourable for a noble man  
Still to remember wrongs ? Daughter, speak  
you ; 155

He cares not for your weeping. Speak thou, boy ;  
Perhaps thy childishness will move him more  
Than can our reasons. There's no man in the  
world

More bound to 's mother ; yet here he lets me prate  
Like one i' the stocks. — Thou hast never in thy  
life 160

Show'd thy dear mother any courtesy,  
 When she, poor hen, fond of no second brood,  
 Has cluck'd thee to the wars and safely home,  
 Loaden with honour. Say my request's unjust,  
 And spurn me back ; but if it be not so, 165  
 Thou art not honest ; and the gods will plague thee,  
 That thou restrain'st from me the duty which  
 To a mother's part belongs. — He turns away.  
 Down, ladies ; let us shame him with our knees.  
 To his surname Coriolanus longs more pride 170  
 Than pity to our prayers. Down ! an end ;  
 This is the last. So we will home to Rome,  
 And die among our neighbours. — Nay, behold's !  
 This boy, that cannot tell what he would have,  
 But kneels and holds up hands for fellowship, 175  
 Does reason our petition with more strength  
 Than thou hast to deny't. — Come, let us go.  
 This fellow had a Volscian to his mother ;  
 His wife is in Corioli, and his child  
 Like him by chance. — Yet give us our dis-  
 patch. 180  
 I am hush'd until our city be a-fire,  
 And then I'll speak a little.

*He holds her by the hand, silent.*

*Cor.*

O mother, mother !

What have you done ? Behold, the heavens do  
 ope,

The gods look down, and this unnatural scene

They laugh at. O my mother, mother! O! 185

You have won a happy victory to Rome;

But, for your son, — believe it, O, believe it,

Most dangerously you have with him prevail'd,

If not most mortal to him. But, let it come.

Aufidius, though I cannot make true wars, 190

I'll frame convenient peace. Now, good Aufidius,

Were you in my stead, would you have heard

A mother less, or granted less, Aufidius?

*Auf.* I was mov'd withal.

*Cor.* I dare be sworn you were;

And, sir, it is no little thing to make 195

Mine eyes to sweat compassion. But, good sir,

What peace you'll make, advise me. For my

part,

I'll not to Rome, I'll back with you; and pray

you,

Stand to me in this cause. — O mother! wife!

*[Speaks apart with them.]*

*Auf.* *[Aside.]* I am glad thou hast set thy mercy and

thy honour 200

At difference in thee. Out of that I'll work

Myself a former fortune.

*Cor.* *[To Volumnia, Virgilia, etc.]* Ay, by and by;

But we will drink together; and you shall bear

A better witness back than words, which we,

On like conditions, will have counter-seal'd. 205

Come, enter with us. Ladies, you deserve

To have a temple built you. All the swords  
 In Italy, and her confederate arms,  
 Could not have made this peace. *Exeunt.*

## SCENE IV

[*Rome. A public place.*]

*Enter Menenius and Sicinius.*

*Men.* See you yond coign o' the Capitol, yond corner-stone?

*Sic.* Why, what of that?

*Men.* If it be possible for you to displace it with your little finger, there is some hope the ladies of Rome, especially his mother, may prevail with him. But I say there is no hope in't; our throats are sentenc'd and stay upon execution. 5

*Sic.* Is't possible that so short a time can alter the condition of a man? 10

*Men.* There is differency between a grub and a butterfly; yet your butterfly was a grub. This Marcius is grown from man to dragon; he has wings; he's more than a creeping thing.

*Sic.* He lov'd his mother dearly. 15

*Men.* So did he me; and he no more remembers his mother now than an eight-year-old horse.

The tartness of his face sours ripe grapes ;  
when he walks, he moves like an engine, and  
the ground shrinks before his treading. He 20  
is able to pierce a corslet with his eye ; talks  
like a knell, and his hum is a battery. He sits  
in his state, as a thing made for Alexander.  
What he bids be done is finish'd with his bid-  
ding. He wants nothing of a god but eternity 25  
and a heaven to throne in.

*Sic.* Yes, mercy, if you report him truly.

*Men.* I paint him in the character. Mark what  
mercy his mother shall bring from him. There  
is no more mercy in him than there is milk in 30  
a male tiger ; that shall our poor city find :  
and all this is long of you.

*Sic.* The gods be good unto us !

*Men.* No, in such a case the gods will not be good  
unto us. When we banish'd him, we respected 35  
not them ; and, he returning to break our  
necks, they respect not us.

*Enter a Messenger.*

*Mess.* Sir, if you'd save your life, fly to your house.  
The plebeians have got your fellow-tribune  
And hale him up and down, all swearing, if 40  
The Roman ladies bring not comfort home,  
They'll give him death by inches.

*Enter a second Messenger.*

*Sic.* What's the news?

[2.] *Mess.* Good news, good news! The ladies have prevail'd,

The Volscians are dislodg'd, and Marcius gone.

A merrier day did never yet greet Rome, 45

No, not the expulsion of the Tarquins.

*Sic.* Friend,

Art thou certain this is true? Is't most certain?

[2.] *Mess.* As certain as I know the sun is fire.

Where have you lurk'd, that you make doubt of it?

Ne'er through an arch so hurried the blown tide, 50

As the recomforted through the gates. Why, hark you!

*Trumpets; hautboys; drums beat; all together.*

The trumpets, sackbuts, psalteries, and fifes,

Tabors and cymbals and the shouting Romans,

Make the sun dance. Hark you!

*A shout within.*

*Men.* This is good news;

I will go meet the ladies. This Volumnia 55

Is worth of consuls, senators, patricians,

A city full; of tribunes, such as you,

A sea and land full. You have pray'd well to-day.

This morning for ten thousand of your throats

I'd not have given a doit. Hark, how they joy!

*Sound still, with the shouts.* 60





## SCENE VI

[*Corioli. A public place.*]

*Enter Tullus Aufidius, with Attendants.*

*Auf.* Go tell the lords o' the city I am here ;  
 Deliver them this paper. Having read it,  
 Bid them repair to the market-place, where I,  
 Even in theirs and in the commons' ears,  
 Will vouch the truth of it. Him I accuse 5  
 The city ports by this hath enter'd, and  
 Intends to appear before the people, hoping  
 To purge himself with words. Dispatch.

[*Exeunt Attendants.*]

*Enter three or four Conspirators of Aufidius' faction.*

Most welcome !

1. *Con.* How is it with our general ?

*Auf.* Even so 10  
 As with a man by his own alms empoison'd,  
 And with his charity slain.

2. *Con.* Most noble sir,  
 If you do hold the same intent wherein  
 You wish'd us parties, we'll deliver you  
 Of your great danger.

*Auf.* Sir, I cannot tell. 15  
 We must proceed as we do find the people.

3. *Con.* The people will remain uncertain whilst  
 'Twixt you there's difference; but the fall of  
 either  
 Makes the survivor heir of all.

*Auf.* I know it;  
 And my pretext to strike at him admits 20  
 A good construction. I rais'd him, and I pawn'd  
 Mine honour for his truth; who being so height-  
 en'd,  
 He watered his new plants with dews of flattery,  
 Seducing so my friends; and, to this end,  
 He bow'd his nature, never known before 25  
 But to be rough, unswayable, and free.

3. *Con.* Sir, his stoutness  
 When he did stand for consul, which he lost  
 By lack of stooping, —

*Auf.* That I would have spoke of.  
 Being banish'd for't, he came unto my hearth, 30  
 Presented to my knife his throat. I took him;  
 Made him joint-servant with me; gave him way  
 In all his own desires; nay, let him choose  
 Out of my files, his projects to accomplish,  
 My best and freshest men; serv'd his design-  
 ments 35  
 In mine own person; help to reap the fame  
 Which he did end all his, and took some pride  
 To do myself this wrong; till, at the last,  
 I seem'd his follower, not partner, and

He wag'd me with his countenance, as if 40  
I had been mercenary.

1. *Con.* So he did, my lord.  
The army marvell'd at it, and, in the last,  
When he had carried Rome and that we look'd  
For no less spoil than glory, —

*Auf.* There was it,  
For which my sinews shall be stretch'd upon  
him. 45

At a few drops of women's rheum, which are  
As cheap as lies, he sold the blood and labour  
Of our great action. Therefore shall he die,  
And I'll renew me in his fall. But, hark!

*Drums and trumpets sound, with great  
shouts of the People.*

1. *Con.* Your native town you enter'd like a post, 50  
And had no welcomes home; but he returns,  
Splitting the air with noise.

2. *Con.* And patient fools,  
Whose children he hath slain, their base throats  
tear  
With giving him glory.

3. *Con.* Therefore, at your vantage,  
Ere he express himself, or move the people 55  
With what he would say, let him feel your sword,  
Which we will second. When he lies along,  
After your way his tale pronounc'd shall bury  
His reasons with his body.

*Auf.* Say no more.

Here come the lords. 60

*Enter the Lords of the city.*

*All the Lords.* You are most welcome home.

*Auf.* I have not deserv'd it.

But, worthy lords, have you with heed perused  
What I have written to you?

*Lords.* We have.

*1. Lord.* And grieve to hear't.

What faults he made before the last, I think  
Might have found easy fines; but there to end 65  
Where he was to begin, and give away  
The benefit of our levies, answering us  
With our own charge, making a treaty where  
There was a yielding, — this admits no excuse.

*Auf.* He approaches; you shall hear him. 70

*Enter Coriolanus, marching with drum and colours;  
Commoners being with him.*

*Cor.* Hail, lords! I am return'd your soldier,  
No more infected with my country's love  
Than when I parted hence, but still subsisting  
Under your great command. You are to know  
That prosperously I have attempted and 75  
With bloody passage led your wars even to  
The gates of Rome. Our spoils we have brought  
home

Do more than counterpoise a full third part  
 The charges of the action. We have made peace  
 With no less honour to the Antiates 80  
 Than shame to the Romans; and we here deliver,  
 Subscrib'd by the consuls and patricians,  
 Together with the seal o' the Senate, what  
 We have compounded on.

*Auf.* Read it not, noble lords;  
 But tell the traitor, in the highest degree 85  
 He hath abus'd your powers.

*Cor.* "Traitor!" How now!

*Auf.* Ay, traitor, Marcius!

*Cor.* "Marcius!"

*Auf.* Ay, Marcius, Caius Marcius! Dost thou think  
 I'll grace thee with that robbery, thy stolen name,  
 Coriolanus, in Corioli? 90

You lords and heads o' the state, perfidiously  
 He has betray'd your business, and given up,  
 For certain drops of salt, your city Rome,  
 I say "your city," to his wife and mother;  
 Breaking his oath and resolution like 95  
 A twist of rotten silk, never admitting  
 Counsel o' the war, but at his nurse's tears  
 He whin'd and roar'd away your victory,  
 That pages blush'd at him and men of heart  
 Look'd wond'ring each at others.

*Cor.* Hear'st thou, Mars?

*Auf.* Name not the god, thou boy of tears!

*Cor.* Ha ! 101

*Auf.* No more.

*Cor.* Measureless liar, thou hast made my heart  
Too great for what contains it. "Boy !" O  
slave !

Pardon me, lords, 'tis the first time that ever 105  
I was forc'd to scold. Your judgements, my grave  
lords,

Must give this cur the lie ; and his own notion —  
Who wears my stripes impress'd upon him, that  
Must bear my beating to his grave — shall join  
To thrust the lie unto him. 110

*1. Lord.* Peace, both, and hear me speak.

*Cor.* Cut me to pieces, Volsces ; men and lads,  
Stain all your edges on me. "Boy !" False  
hound !

If you have writ your annals true, 'tis there,  
That, like an eagle in a dove-cote, I 115  
Flutter'd your Volscians in Corioli ;  
Alone I did it. "Boy !"

*Auf.* Why, noble lords,  
Will you be put in mind of his blind fortune,  
Which was your shame, by this unholy brag-  
gart, 119

'Fore your own eyes and ears ?

*All Consp.* Let him die for't.

*All the people.* Tear him to pieces ! Do it pres-  
ently ! — He kill'd my son ! — My daughter !

— He kill'd my cousin Marcus ! — He kill'd  
my father !

2. *Lord.* Peace, ho ! no outrage : peace ! 125  
The man is noble and his fame folds in  
This orb o' the earth. His last offences to us  
Shall have judicious hearing. Stand, Aufidius,  
And trouble not the peace.

*Cor.* O that I had him,  
With six Aufidiuses or more, his tribe, 130  
To use my lawful sword !

*Auf.* Insolent villain !

*All Consp.* Kill, kill, kill, kill, kill him !

*Both the Conspirators draw and kill Coriolanus,  
who falls : Aufidius stands on him.*

*Lords.* Hold, hold, hold, hold !

*Auf.* My noble masters, hear me speak.

1. *Lord.* O Tullus !

2. *Lord.* Thou hast done a deed whereat valour will  
weep.

3. *Lord.* Tread not upon him. Masters all, be  
quiet ; 135

Put up your swords.

*Auf.* My lords, when you shall know — as in this  
rage,

Provok'd by him, you cannot — the great danger  
Which this man's life did owe you, you'll rejoice  
That he is thus cut off. Please it your honours  
To call me to your Senate, I'll deliver 141



Myself your loyal servant, or endure  
Your heaviest censure.

1. *Lord.* Bear from hence his body ;  
And mourn you for him. Let him be regarded  
As the most noble corse that ever herald 145  
Did follow to his urn.

2. *Lord.* His own impatience  
Takes from Aufidius a great part of blame.  
Let's make the best of it.

*Auf.* My rage is gone,  
And I am struck with sorrow. Take him up.  
Help, three o' the chiefest soldiers ; I'll be one. 150  
Beat thou the drum, that it speak mournfully.  
Trail your steel pikes. Though in this city he  
Hath widowed and unchilded many a one,  
Which to this hour bewail the injury,  
Yet he shall have a noble memory. 155  
Assist.

*Exeunt, bearing the body of Coriolanus. A dead  
march sounded.*





## Notes

**Act First. Scene i.** The division into acts is made in the first Folio, but only the first scene division is there indicated. A list of *Dramatis Personæ* was first given by Rowe, and the scene settings are mainly due to Rowe and Pope.

**I. i. 25. rakes.** "As lean as a rake" is proverbial. Cf. Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, A, 287, "As lene was his hors as is a rake."

**I. i. 29. he's a very dog to the commonalty.** Cf. *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, II. iii. 11-12. "He is a stone, a very pebble stone, and has no more pity in him than a dog."

**I. i. 39. he did it to please his mother.** Plutarch says, "the only thing that made him to love honour, was the joye he sawe his mother dyd take of him."

**I. i. 112. Which ne'er came from the lungs.** Not a cordial but a satirical smile.

**I. i. 124. 'Fore me.** A very mild oath. Parliament passed an act in 1606 to prevent the abuse of God's name in stage plays. In several instances the Folio softens or omits oaths found in the quartos.

**I. i. 130. You'st.** A provincial or colloquial form.

**I. i. 163. rascal.** A lean ill-conditioned deer. **Worst in blood to run.** In the poorest state for running.

**I. i. 178-180. Your virtue is . . . justice did it.** You make a point of upholding the man who has been dis-

graced by his acts and of railing at the law under which he is adjudged guilty.

I. i. 186. **With every minute you do change a mind.** Cf. the marginal gloss in Plutarch, "See the fickle mindes of common people."

I. i. 197. **side factions.** Take part with factions.

I. i. 203. **quarter'd slaves.** Slaves who should be cut in quarters. For this anticipatory use of the perfect participle compare Keats's *Isabella*, XXVII:

So the two brothers and their murder'd man  
Rode past fair Florence.

I. i. 206. **they lack discretion.** Lacking discretion, which, according to the proverb, is the better part of valor, they might be expected to possess courage.

I. i. 209. **sigh'd forth proverbs.** Cf. Bobadil's ridicule of Downright in Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour*, I. iv, "He has not so much as a good phrase in his belly, but all old iron, and rusty proverbs."

I. i. 215. **generosity.** Those of noble birth.

I. i. 219. **Five tribunes.** Cf. Plutarch: "These persuasions [the arguments of Menenius] pacified the people, conditionally, that the Senate would graunte there should be yerely chosen five magistrates, which they now call *Tribuni Plebis*, whose office should be to defend the poore people from violence and oppression. So Iunius Brutus, and Sicinius Vellutus, were the first Tribunes of the people that were chosen, who had only bene the causers and procurers of this sedition."

I. i. 224. **Win upon power.** Gain advantage over those in authority.

I. i. 233. put you to't. Call forth your utmost ability.

I. i. 281. How the dispatch is made. What form of commission the state gives the generals for this war.

I. i. 282. More than his singularity. Apart from his characteristic behavior.

I. ii. 9. press'd a power. Levied an army.

I. ii. 15. preparation. Military force. Cf. *Othello*, I.

iii. 221-222, "The Turk with a most mighty preparation makes for Cyprus."

I. ii. 28. set down before's. Encamp against us.—for the remove. To raise the siege.

I. iii. 16. bound with oak. Plutarch relates the incident: "A Romaine souldier being throwen to the ground even hard by him, Martius straight bestrid him, and slue the enemy with his owne handes that had before overthrowen the Romaine. Here upon, after the battell was wonne, the Dictator dyd not forget so noble an acte, and therefore first of all he crowned Martius with a garland of oken boughs. For whosoever saveth the life of a Romaine, it is a manner among them, to honour him with such a garland."

I. iii. 43. Than gilt his trophy. Wright explains *trophy* as "the ornaments of his tomb," but the word possibly means here a gilded monument raised in honor of his triumph; cf. *Henry V*, V. Prologue, 21.

J. iii. 55, 56. fine spot. Valeria refers to the pattern of the embroidery. Cf. Desdemona's handkerchief "spotted with strawberries," *Othello*, III. iii. 435.

I. iii. 92-94. yet, they say, . . . full of moths. An example of similar levity toward classical story may be found in the *Tempest*, II. i. 76 ff., "Not since widow Dido's

time," etc. In both cases the effect is a touch of realistic characterization.

I. iii. 117. **our better mirth.** Our mirth which will be better without her.

I. iv. 14. The meaning is clear, but the use of a double negative, *nor* and *less*, is confusing, and has given rise to various emendations.

I. iv. 26. **They do disdain us much beyond our thoughts.** "So the Coriolans making small accompt of them that laye in campe before the cittie, made a salye out upon them, in the which at the first the Coriolans had the better, and drave the Romaines backe againe into the trenches." — PLUTARCH.

I. iv. 47. **To the pot.** To destruction. Cf. *The Man in the Moone*, 1609, Percy Society, No. LXXXIV, page 2: "all that hee can get, or borrow, goeth to the pot."

I. iv. 51. **He is himself alone.** Plutarch says, "he was entred the cittie with very fewe men to helpe him." Genest thought that Tate had made one considerable improvement on Shakespeare in *The Ingratitude of a Commonwealth* by representing Caius Marcius "as not being quite alone on this occasion."

I. iv. 53. **sensibly outdares his senseless sword.** He, though possessed of feeling, is braver than his sword which has no feeling.

I. iv. 57. **Even to Cato's wish.** In the mouth of Lartius this is of course an anachronism. Plutarch makes the remark on his own account: "For he was even such another, as Cato would have a souldier and a captaine to be: not only terrible, and fierce to laye about him, but to make theemie afeard with the sounde of his voyce, and

grimness of his countenance." For *Cato's*, the Folio has *Calves*.

I. v. 7. Of a doit. Worth half a farthing.

I. vi. 16. briefly. A short time ago.

I. vi. 76. O, me alone, make you a sword of me? Many editors have considered this line obscure and in need of emendation. It makes, however, excellent and spirited sense as it stands in the Folio: *Oh me alone, make you a sword of me*; with a sense of exaltation excited by the instant response of the soldiers to his personal appeal, Coriolanus thinks of himself, borne on the shoulders of the troops, as an animated blade, singly invincible against the enemy. "Take me alone," the line means, as printed in the Folio, "and use me like a sword." The introduction of the interrogation mark, proposed by Capell, slightly alters the mood, but not the meaning.

I. viii. 4. fame and envy. Hendiadys for envied (or hated) fame. Other cases of this figure are *noise and horn*, III. i. 95; *austerity and garb*, IV. vii. 46.

I. viii. 12. the whip of your bragg'd progeny. Hector was the military leader of the Trojans, who were progenitors of the Romans.

I. viii. 15. In your condemned seconds. By your damned assistance. By increasing the fighting strength of Aufidius they had added to the disgrace of his defeat.

I. ix. 41-46. May these same instruments . . . coverture for the wars! Coriolanus, with characteristic dislike of popular applause, wishes martial instruments confined strictly to martial uses. If drums and trumpets, of which we expect stern sincerity, are prostituted to flattery, then let courts and cities, of which we ordinarily expect less

candor, give themselves over wholly to hypocrisy. When the adulation of the city parasite is imitated upon the field of battle, then soldiers have ceased to be themselves, and may as well wear his silk as their steel.

I. ix. 55. **give you truly.** Estimate your virtues correctly.

I. ix. 57. **means his proper harm.** Intends injury to himself.

I. ix. 65. **Caius Marcius Coriolanus.** "And thereby it appeareth, that the first name the Romaines have, as Caius: was our Christian name now. The second as Martius: was the name of the house and familie they came of. The third, was some addition geven, either for some acte or notable service." — PLUTARCH.

I. ix. 72. **undercrest your good addition.** Wear the good title you have conferred upon me as a crest.

I. ix. 77. **articulate.** Draw up conditions of peace.

I. ix. 83-90. **At a poor man's house, etc.** Plutarch says, "an olde friende and hoste of mine, an honest wealthie man"; he places the incident before the surnaming of Coriolanus, which concludes this part of his narrative; and he gives no hint for the admired stroke, "*By Jupiter! forgot.*"

I. x. 5, 6. **Condition!** What good condition can a treaty find? Aufidius repeats the word in the sense intended by the soldier — *terms*; then in his question he plays on a second meaning — *quality* or *character*.

I. x. 12-24. **Mine emulation . . . to Marcius.** Coleridge thought the aspect of Aufidius here depicted must be in nature because it is in Shakespeare. He could not discover in himself, however, "any germ of possible feeling,



which could wax and unfold itself into such sentiment as this." Its dramatic function, he points out, is the "prevention of shock at the after change in Aufidius' character."

— *Lectures upon Shakespeare.*

I. x. 25. **Upon my brother's guard.** Guarded by my brother.

I. x. 26. **Against the hospitable canon.** The law of hospitality forbids injuring an enemy who is in the position of a guest.

II. i. 26. **the right-hand file.** The patricians. On "the dignity of Files" see Peacham's chapter "Of Military Observations" in the *Compleat Gentleman*, 1634.

II. i. 32. **little thief of occasion.** Slight provocation.

II. i. 64. **the ass in compound.** A pun on the last syllables of Sicinius and Brutus. Wright observes that "Shakespeare was thinking of the little Latin he learnt at school, and the 'As in praesenti,' &c."

II. i. 69. **map of my microcosm.** My character as it presents itself to you. That the individual man images in miniature the universe was a notion worked hard by Shakespeare and his contemporaries.

II. i. 70. **bisson conspectuities.** Blind sights. The Folio has *beesome*, which may be a dialectic form. Menenius employs this "vile phrase," composed of an archaic and provincial word plus a coinage of his own, rather to deride than to enlighten the ignorance of the tribunes.

II. i. 76. **legs.** Bows. Cf. Jonson's *Silent Woman*, II. i, "Mute makes a leg."

II. i. 128. **Galen.** A now obvious anachronism; Galen lived in the second century A.D.

II. i. 214. **change of honours.** Variety of honors. Cf.

Ford's *Broken Heart*, IV. i, "Their very dreams present 'em choice of pleasures . . . increments of honours . . . change of garments . . . votes of people."

II. i. 227, 228. hors'd with variable complexions. Be-stridden by people of various sorts.

II. i. 250. Naples vesture of humility. Plutarch says, "the custome of Rome was at that time, that suche as dyd sue for any office, should for certen dayes before be in the market place, only with a poore gowne on their backes, and without any coate underneath, to praye the cittizens to remember them at the daye of election."

II. i. 272. put upon't. Urged to it.

II. ii. 24-26. Now, to seem to affect the malice . . . to flatter them for their love. Plutarch says in his Comparison of Alcibiades with Martius Coriolanus, "he is lesse to be blamed, that seeketh to please and gratifie his common people: then he that despiseth and disdaineth them, and therefore offereth them wrong and injurie, bicause he would not seeme to flatter them, to winne the more authoritie."

II. ii. 41. Having determin'd of the Volsces. Having come to a decision concerning them.

II. ii. 87, 88. It is held that valour is the chiefest virtue. Plutarch explains: "Now in those days, valliantness was honoured in Rome above all other vertues: which they called *Virtus*, by the name of vertue selfe, as including in that generall name, all other speciall vertues besides."

II. ii. 92. made a head. Raised an army.

II. ii. 95. Amazonian chin. Chin beardless like that of the female warriors.

II. ii. 105. He lurch'd all swords of the garland. He

outdid all others. For the bearing of this expression on the date of the play, see the Introduction.

II. ii. 107. **Speak him home.** Do him justice in words.

II. ii. 112. **it took.** Like a fatal disease marked by a plague spot, or like the influence of a malign spirit. Cf. *Hamlet*, I. i. 163, "No fairy takes."

II. ii. 115, 116. **painted with shunless destiny.** Wright compares the custom of painting plague-stricken houses with a red cross. Possibly there is a reminiscence also of the blood-painted doors by which the Israelites avoided the "shunless destiny" of the first-born of the Egyptians.

II. ii. 117. **struck.** As applied to a comet, *strike* has a technical sense. A comet strikes by malign influence. Cf. *Hamlet*, I. i. 162; *Winter's Tale*, I. ii. 201.

II. iii. 63, 64. **the virtues which our divines lose by them.** Our divines commend to their keeping virtues which, by forgetting, they lose.

II. iii. 102. **sworn brother.** *Fratres jurati* were those who had taken an oath to share each other's fortunes.

II. iii. 107. **be off to them.** Take off my hat to them.

II. iii. 122. **woolless toge.** The first Folio has *Woolvish tongue*, the second, *Woolvish gowne*. *Tongue* is generally agreed to be a printer's mistake for *toge*. If *wolvish* is retained, an allusion to the wolf in sheep's clothing is understood; in which case one may detect in the word a kind of echo of the wolf that loves the lamb in II. i. 8, 9. The reading *woolless* is supported by the *napless vesture of humility*, II. i. 250.

II. iii. 227. **Enforce his pride.** Lay stress upon his pride.

III. i. 24. **Against all noble sufferance.** Beyond the

endurance of the nobility. Shakespeare often uses an adjective to perform the office of the first part of a compound noun. Cf. *Lucrece*, 1096, *old woes*, i.e. woes of old people.

III. i. 62. **This was my speech.** The substance of this speech, with many particular phrases, is in Plutarch.

III. i. 89. **Triton of the minnows.** Spokesman of the small fry. Triton was Neptune's trumpeter.

III. i. 90. **from the canon.** A violation of propriety, contrary to law. The first Folio has Cannon, which is retained and defended in the Porter-Clarke edition: "That is, from the big gun — another anachronism which has lacked notice because commonly explained in the sense of canon as rule or law."

III. i. 95. **The horn and noise o' the monster's.** Coriolanus unites his two figures: the tribune, *Triton*, is the horn through which the multitude, *Hydra*, blows.

III. i. 103, 104. **the great'st taste Most palates theirs.** The predominant flavor is plebeian.

III. i. 154. **jump a body.** Subject it to hazard.

III. i. 213. **Bear him to the rock Tarpeian.** Plutarch says, "Whereupon Sicinius, the cruellest and stowtest of the Tribunes, after he had whispered a litle with his companions, dyd openly pronounce in the face of all the people, Martius as condemned by the Tribunes to dye. Then presently he commaunded the Ædiles to apprehend him, and carie him straight to the rocke Tarpeian, and to cast him hedlong downe the same."

III. i. 275. **Do not cry havoc.** Do not give the signal for indiscriminate slaughter.

III. i. 304. **Clean kam.** All wrong.

III. i. 305. **Merely awry.** Entirely "twisted." *Merely* here, as elsewhere in Shakespeare, is much more emphatic than in our present usage, meaning rather *absolutely* than *only*.

III. ii. 9. **woollen vassals.** A slur at their coarse clothing.

III. ii. 52. **It lies you on.** It is incumbent on you.

III. ii. 78. **The construction is confused;** *which* is used loosely as a connective.

III. ii. 99. **unbarb'd sponce.** Unarmed head.

III. iii. 26, 27. **his worth Of contradiction.** His full proportion of contradiction.

III. iii. 32. **the poorest piece.** The smallest coin.

III. iii. 33. **bear the knave.** Allow himself to be called knave.

IV. i. 49. **of noble touch.** Of approved nobility — tried as gold is by the touchstone.

IV. iii. 48, 49. **in the entertainment.** Engaged for service.

IV. iv. 22. **interjoin their issues.** Unite their children in marriage.

IV. v. 47. **daws.** The daw was a proverbially foolish bird.

IV. v. 92, 93. **maims Of shame.** Shameful hurts.

IV. v. 115, 116. **I clip the anvil of my sword.** I embrace the man whom my sword has struck as the hammer does the anvil.

IV. v. 200. **cannibally given.** Inclined to cannibalism.

IV. v. 203. **made on.** Made much of.

IV. v. 222. **directitude.** Evidently a wild shot on the part of the servant; Malone proposed *discreditude*, which

is hardly necessary to bring out the lurking sense of the blunder.

IV. v. 225. **in blood.** In good condition.

IV. v. 238. **full of vent.** This disputed phrase has been explained as a hunting term, meaning *full of the excitement of the chase*. Wright points out that *spritely, waking, audible*, and *full of vent* are the opposites in inverse order of *mull'd, deaf, sleepy, insensible*; and he adds that "as 'mull'd' signifies 'flat, insipid,' 'full of vent' would seem to be effervescent, working ready to burst the cask, or full of scent."

IV. vi. 96. **apron-men.** Artisans and tradespeople who wore aprons.

IV. vi. 97. **the voice of occupation.** The will and vote of the working classes. Cf. Peacham's *Compleat Gentleman*, "Touching Mechanicall Arts and Artists, whosoever labour for their livelihood and gaine, have no share at all in Nobility or Gentry . . . Yea, if a Noble man, borne in captivity, or constrained through any other necessity, shall exercise any manuell occupation or Art, hee by the opinion of some, looseth his Nobility Civill, but not Christian, and shall at his returne be restored."

IV. vi. 100. **mellow fruit.** An allusion to the apples of the Hesperides sought by Hercules in one of his twelve labors.

IV. vi. 117. **fair hands.** A pretty piece of business.

IV. vi. 118. **crafted.** A nonce-word playing on crafts. Cf. *fidius'd*, II. i. 144.

IV. vii. 6. **your own.** Your own soldiers.

IV. vii. 34. **osprey to the fish.** The osprey was vulgarly thought to fascinate fish so that they turned up their bellies and submitted unresistingly to be taken.

IV. vii. 48, 49. he has a merit To choke it in the utterance. *It* refers to the "one of these" faults that Aufidius has just been enumerating which made Coriolanus feared, hated, and banished. Though in these special circumstances it is a fatal defect, it is but a spice in his disposition; to mention it, is but to remind one of his overshadowing merit. Wright says, "his merit was great enough to have prevented the sentence [of banishment] from being uttered"; to which the literalist might reply that it was *not*. His interpretation further necessitates an understood antecedent for *it*, in place of *one*, which seems adequate.

IV. vii. 49-50. So our virtues . . . of the time. The meaning is that we cannot be judges of our own virtues; they must be stamped with the approval of the society in which we live, before they can become current. Shakespeare seems much interested in what we may call the social sanctions of virtue in *Troilus and Cressida*. In the mood of Aufidius, Troilus asks: "What is aught, but as 'tis valu'd?" (II. ii. 52). Hector replies (II. ii. 53-56):

But value dwells not in particular will;  
It holds his estimate and dignity  
As well wherein 'tis precious of itself  
As in the prizer.

Later in the play (III. iii. 95 ff.) Ulysses and Achilles discuss the same point.

IV. vii. 51-53. And power . . . extol what it hath done. A person who possesses power, though it merit commendation, cannot more speedily terminate its effectiveness than by praising what he has accomplished by it. Cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, I. iii. 241-242:

The worthiness of praise distains his worth,  
If that the prais'd himself bring the praise forth.

V. i. 3. **In a most dear particular.** With a most personal fondness.

V. i. 63. **sit in gold.** Plutarch says that Coriolanus received the ambassadors "set in a chayer of state, with a marvelous and an unspeakable majestie."

V. ii. 20. **subtle ground.** Ground of a treacherous smoothness.

V. ii. 21, 22. **I have tumbled past the throw . . . stamp'd the leasing.** I have exaggerated in his praise, and have almost given currency to the lie.

V. ii. 89-91. **I owe . . . Volscian breasts.** Vengeance is in my own hands, but power of pardon I must receive from the Volscians.

V. iii. 41. **I am out.** I have forgotten my part. The expression is of frequent occurrence with reference to a speaker's slips of memory. Cf. *As You Like It*, IV. i. 75-76.

V. iv. 23. **as a thing made for Alexander.** As if made to represent Alexander the Great.

V. vi. 40. **wag'd me with his countenance.** Rewarded me with his favor.

V. vi. 58. **After your way his tale pronounc'd.** An account of his conduct given as you will give it.

V. vi. 67-68. **answering us With our own charge.** "Rewarding us with our own expences." — JOHNSON. In ll. 77-79 below, Coriolanus declares that the expedition has returned more than the expenses by a third.

V. vi. 107. **his own notion.** Knowledge, understanding.



## Textual Variants

The text in the present edition is based on the first Folio, and the following list records the more important variants from that version.

- I. i. 35. [*2 Cit.*] All Ff.  
58. *2 Cit.*] Ff. Most modern editors change to *1 Cit.* and throughout the rest of the scene.  
95. stale] scale Ff.  
119. crowned] crown'd Ff.  
iii. 46. contemning. Tell] Contenning, tell Ff.  
iv. 57. [Cato's] From Plutarch. Calues Ff.  
vi. 59. Antiates] Antients Ff.  
76. of me?] of me Ff.  
ix. 46. coverture] overture Ff.  
x. 22. embargements] embarquements Ff.
- II. i. 63. can't] can Ff.  
70. bisson] beesome Ff.  
i. 79. faucet] forset Ff.  
181, etc. Caius Marcius] Martius Caius.  
182. Coriolanus] Martius Caius Coriolanus Ff.  
267. the] their Ff.  
271. touch] teach Ff.  
ii. 85. one on's] F<sub>3</sub>; on ones F<sub>1</sub>, 2.  
iii. 21. auburn] F<sub>4</sub>; Abram F<sub>1</sub>.  
122. woolless toge] Wooluish tongue F<sub>1</sub>; Woolvish gowne F<sub>2</sub>.  
123. do] F<sub>4</sub>; does F<sub>1</sub>.  
163. *Citizens*] *the Plebeians* Ff.

- 251-252. [And . . . censor] Globe Ed. after Plutarch; And Nobly nam'd, so twice being Censor, Ff.
- III. i. 91. good] God! Ff.  
 92. reckless] wrecklesse Ff.  
 129. motive] native Ff.  
 131. bisson multitude] Bosome-multiplied Ff.  
 143. Where one] Whereon Ff.  
 181. *Citizens*] *Plebeians* Ff.  
 184. [*Citizens*] *All* Ff.  
 237. *Com.*]F<sub>2</sub>; Corio F<sub>1</sub>.  
 238. *Cor.*] Mene. Ff.  
 240. [*Men.*] Ff. *omits*
- ii. 21. thwartings] things Ff.  
 32. herd] heart Ff.  
 113. choir'd] quier'd Ff.
- iii. 36. Throng] Through Ff.  
 130. not] but Ff.
- IV. i. 4. extremity] F<sub>2</sub>; extremities F<sub>1</sub>.  
 iv. 23. hate] have Ff.  
 v. 237. spritely, waking] sprightly walking Ff.  
 vi. 4. hurry, here do] hurry. Here do we Ff.  
 vii. 28. yield] yeelds Ff.  
 49. virtues] Vertue Ff.  
 55. falter] fouler Ff.
- V. i. 16. wreck'd fair] wrack'd for Ff.  
 ii. 17. magnified] verified Ff.  
 80. our] F<sub>4</sub>; your F<sub>1</sub>.  
 iii. 48. prate] pray Ff.  
 63. holp] hope F.  
 vi. 116. Flutter'd] F<sub>3</sub>; Flatter'd F<sub>1</sub>, 2.

## Glossary

- abated, humbled; III. iii. 132.  
absolute, complete, perfect; IV. v. 142.  
addition, title; I. ix. 66.  
advanc'd, raised; II. i. 178.  
affects, aims at, desires; III. iii. 1.  
allowance, admittance, approval; III. ii. 57.  
anon, at once; II. iii. 149.  
Antiates, people of Antium; III. iii. 4.  
appear'd, made apparent; IV. iii. 9.  
apron-men, see note, IV. vi. 96.  
aptness, readiness; IV. iii. 24.  
articulate, draw up articles; I. ix. 77.  
atone, be reconciled; IV. vi. 72.
- bale, injury, wrong; I. i. 167.  
battle, troops drawn up in order for combat; I. vi. 51.  
bencher, magistrate, senator; II. i. 92.  
bewray, disclose; V. iii. 95.  
billeted, enrolled; IV. iii. 48.  
bisson, purblind; II. i. 70; III. i. 131.  
bolted, sifted, choice; III. i. 322.  
bonneted, took off the bonnet; II. ii. 30.  
botcher's, a botcher is one who mends old clothes; II. i. 98.  
briefly, a short time since; I. vi. 16.  
bulk, projecting part of a shop; II. i. 226.  
bussing, kissing; III. ii. 75.
- carbonado, a piece of meat slashed across for cooking;  
IV. v. 199.

- cautelous, crafty; IV. i. 33.  
 censure, judgment; I. i. 272: condemnation; III. iii. 46.  
 cog, cheat; III. ii. 133.  
 coign, a projection from a building, a cornerstone; V. iv. 1.  
 companions, fellows (in the contemptuous sense); IV. v. 14.  
 composition, agreement; III. i. 3.  
 compounded, agreed; V. vi. 84.  
 condition, character, quality; I. x. 6.  
 confound, consume; I. vi. 17.  
 conies, rabbits; IV. v. 226.  
 conspectuities, faculties of sight; II. i. 70.  
 contriv'd, plotted; III. iii. 63.  
 convented, assembled; II. ii. 58.  
 coy'd, disdained; V. i. 6.  
 crack, little rogue; I. iii. 74.  
 cranks, windings; I. i. 141.  
 cry, pack; III. iii. 120.  
  
 dear, vitally important, coming home to one intimately;  
     V. i. 3.  
 debile, weak; I. ix. 48.  
 demerits, deserts; I. i. 276.  
 determine, end; III. iii. 43; V. iii. 120.  
 Deucalion, the classical Noah; II. i. 102.  
 directitude, see note, IV. v. 222.  
 disease, disturb; I. iii. 117.  
 disbench'd, drove from the seat; II. ii. 75.  
 dispropertied, abrogated; II. i. 264.  
 doit, half a farthing; I. v. 7.  
 dotant, dotard; V. ii. 47.  
  
 embargements, preventives; I. x. 22.  
 empiricuttic, empirical; II. i. 128.  
 end, garner; V. vi. 37.

- enforce**, press hard; III. iii. 3.  
**engine**, machine; V. iv. 19.  
**entertainment**, service; IV. iii. 49.  
**envy**, hatred; III. iii. 3, etc.  
**exposture**, exposure; IV. i. 36.  
  
**factionary**, partisan; V. ii. 30.  
**fatigate**, fatigued; II. ii. 121.  
**favour**, countenance; IV. iii. 9.  
**fidius'd**, *i.e.* Aufidiused, beaten; II. i. 144.  
**flamens**, priests; II. i. 229.  
**flaw**, gust of wind; V. iii. 74.  
**fob off**, put aside craftily; I. i. 97.  
**fond**, foolish; IV. i. 26.  
**foxship**, cunning; IV. ii. 18.  
  
**Galen**, the great medical authority who lived in the second century; II. i. 128.  
**gave**, informed; IV. v. 157.  
**generosity**, nobility; I. i. 215.  
**gentry**, inherited rank; III. i. 144.  
**give**, represent; I. ix. 55.  
**God-den**, good even; II. i. 103.  
**gratify**, thank, reward; II. ii. 44.  
**grief-shot**, stricken with grief; V. i. 44.  
**guardant**, on guard; V. ii. 68.  
  
**head**, army; II. ii. 92.  
**home**, adequately; II. ii. 107.  
**horse-drench**, horse medicine; II. i. 130.  
  
**Jack**, impudent fellow; V. ii. 67.  
**jump**, chance, risk; III. i. 154.  
  
**kam**, crooked; III. i. 304.

- leads, lead roofs; II. i. 227.  
 leasing, lying; V. ii. 22.  
 legs, bows; II. i. 76.  
 limitation, appointed time; II. iii. 146.  
 lockram, a kind of linen cloth; II. i. 225.  
 longs, belongs; V. iii. 170.  
 lurch'd, robbed; II. ii. 105.
- Malkin**, wench; II. i. 224.  
**mammoth'd**, tore to bits; I. iii. 71.  
**mankind**, masculine; IV. ii. 16.  
**memory**, memorial; IV. v. 77.  
**merely**, absolutely, entirely; III. i. 305.  
**microcosm**, little world; see note, II. i. 69.  
**moe**, more; II. iii. 132.  
**monster'd**, made monstrous; II. ii. 81.  
**motion**, motive, II. i. 55; interposition; II. ii. 57.  
**mountebank**, win by the tricks of a mountebank; III. ii. 132.  
**movers**, loafers and thieves; I. v. 5.  
**mull'd**, dulled, insipid; IV. v. 239.  
**mummers**, masqueraders; II. i. 83.  
**muniments**, supports; I. i. 122.  
**murrain**, a plague afflicting animals; I. v. 3.  
**muse**, wonder; III. ii. 7.
- napless**, threadbare; II. i. 250.  
**nervy**, sinewy; II. i. 177.  
**nicely-gawded**, carefully decorated or painted; II. i. 233.  
**notion**, understanding, knowledge; V. vi. 107.
- object**, sight, spectacle; I. i. 21.  
**occupation**, trade; IV. vi. 97.  
**o'er-beat**, overpower; IV. v. 137.  
**o'er-peer**, rise above; II. iii. 128.

- office, restrain by virtue of office; V. ii. 68.  
offices, rooms used for domestic services; I. i. 141.  
on, on's, on't, of, of his, of it.  
opinion, reputation; I. i. 275.  
opposite, enemy; II. ii. 23.  
ordinance, rank; III. ii. 12.  
ostentation, demonstration — with no suggestion of disparagement; I. vi. 86.
- palates, tastes of; III. i. 104.  
part, side, party; I. x. 7.  
particular, personal; IV. v. 92, etc.  
passable, of power to secure admission; V. ii. 13.  
passing, exceedingly; I. i. 207.  
physical, remedial, wholesome; I. v. 19.  
pick, pitch; I. i. 204.  
points, commands; IV. vi. 125.  
poll, number; III. i. 134.  
poll'd, shorn; IV. v. 215.  
portance, behavior; II. iii. 232.  
ports, gates; I. vii. 1.  
post, messenger; V. vi. 50.  
potch, strike; I. x. 15.  
pound up, shut in; I. iv. 17.  
power, army; I. ii. 9.  
practice, plot, evil contrivance; IV. i. 33.  
preparation, military force; I. ii. 15.  
press'd, forced into military service; I. ii. 9.  
progeny, lineage; I. viii. 12.  
proper, own; I. ix. 57.  
provand, provender; II. i. 267.  
psalteries, stringed instruments resembling the zither;  
V. iv. 52.  
putting on, instigation; II. iii. 260.

quarry, heap of the slain; I. i. 202.

rapture, fit; II. i. 223.

rascal, deer in ill condition; see note, I. i. 163.

receipt, what is received; I. i. 116.

reckless, heedless, foolish; III. i. 92.

rectorship, guidance; II. iii. 213.

reechy, smoky, dirty; II. i. 225.

rejour, adjourn; II. i. 79.

request, popularity, favor; IV. iii. 37.

require, request; II. ii. 160.

rheum, moisture, tears; V. vi. 46.

roted, memorized; III. ii. 55.

rub, obstacle — from the game of bowls; III. i. 60.

sackbuts, instruments like trombones; V. iv. 52.

scaling, weighing; II. iii. 257.

sconce, head; III. ii. 99.

scotch'd, gashed; IV. v. 198.

season'd, established and approved by time; III. iii. 64.

seld-shown, seldom shown; II. i. 229.

sensibly, being capable of feeling; I. iv. 53.

shent, reproached; V. ii. 104.

side, faction, party; IV. vi. 151.

single, weak; II. i. 40.

sithence, since; III. i. 47.

sowl, drag by the ears; IV. v. 214.

spices, flavors, traces; IV. vii. 46.

stem, the forward part of a vessel; II. ii. 111.

stitchery, stitching; I. iii. 75.

stout, proud; III. ii. 78.

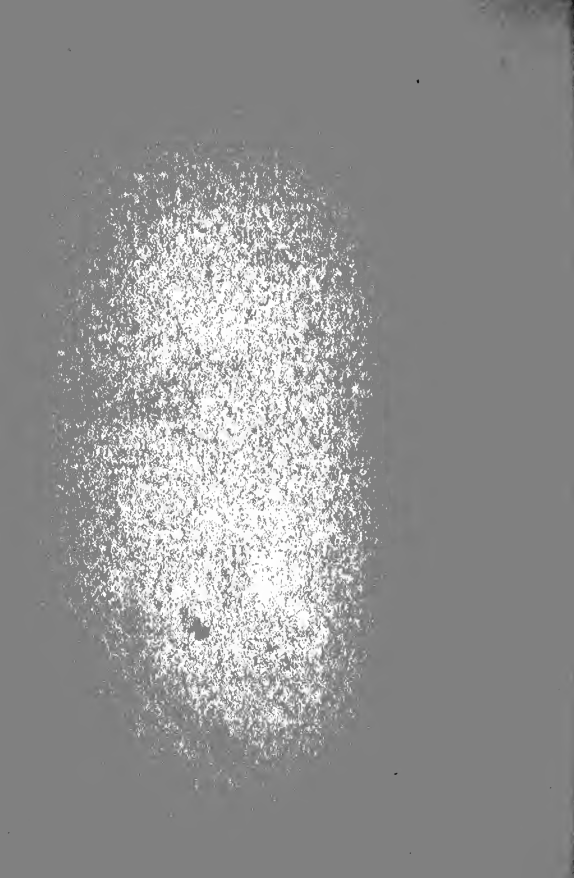
stoutness, stubbornness; III. ii. 127.

subtle, smooth and treacherous; V. ii. 20.

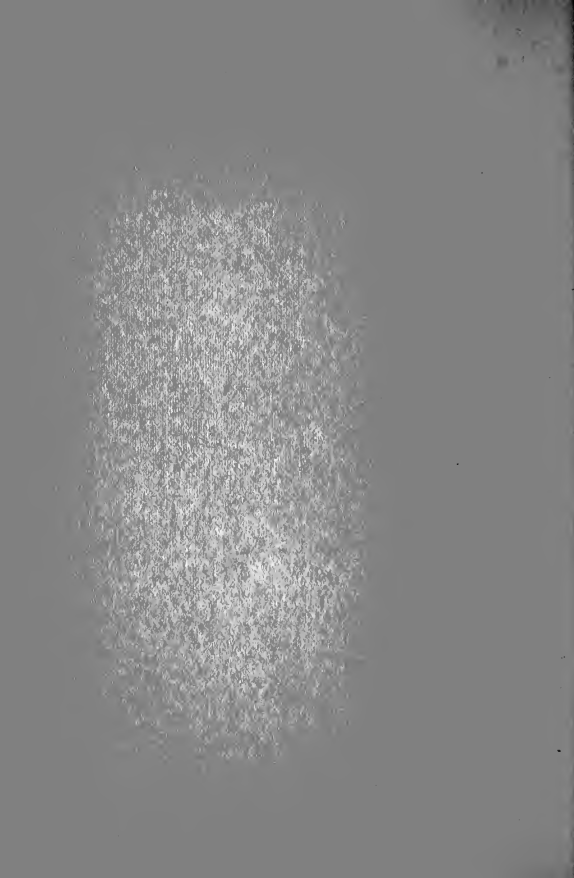
sufferance, suffering; I. i. 23.



- tag, rabble; III. i. 248.  
take in, conquer; I. ii. 24; III. ii. 59.  
target, shield; IV. v. 126.  
tent, probe, cure; I. ix. 31; III. i. 236.  
tetter, infect as with a disease of the skin; III. i. 79.  
toge, toga; II. iii. 122.  
took, blasted; II. ii. 112.  
touch, quality tried as by the touchstone; IV. i. 49.  
Triton, the trumpeter of Neptune; III. i. 89.
- unbarb'd, bare, unarmed; III. ii. 99.  
undercrest, wear as a crest; I. ix. 72.  
unscann'd, unconsidered; III. i. 313.
- vail, lower; III. i. 98.  
vantage, profit, opportunity; I. i. 164.  
vaward, van; I. vi. 53.  
vengeance, deucedly (the word is used as an adverb);  
II. ii. 6: the deuce, III. i. 262.  
vent, see note, IV. v. 238.  
voices, votes; II. ii. 144.
- wealsmen, statesmen, politicians; II. i. 60.  
well-found, fortunate; II. ii. 48.  
whip, leader; I. viii. 12.  
withal, with; III. i. 142.  
wot, know; IV. v. 171.  
wreak, revenge; IV. v. 91.













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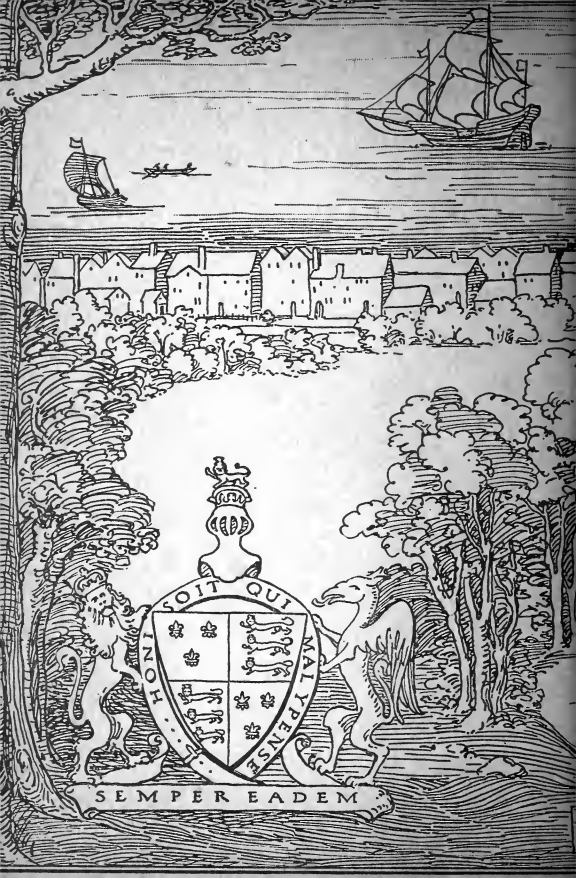
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